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The effect of privacy issues on brand attachment

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Abstract

Personal information is currently considered the most useful tool in the online environment, which serves corporations with higher revenue and competitiveness. However, current regulations regarding data collection through consumers' online activities still allow corporations to exceed the boundaries of privacy, since this information provided from one customer does not only consider one individual, but also the people they interact with. Thus, contemporary marketing activities create the essence of data vulnerability and exposure and often drive negative responses to data collection, which eventually leads to the exact opposite outcome of the initial goal, which is interaction with the target audience, loyalty, and finally profitability. This thesis analyses how privacy misconduct affects the connection of consumers with the brand. More specifically, it delves into whether the awareness of a brand's data leakage incident may influence consumer's attachment with this corporation. To answer this question, I conducted an online survey that was focused on a Facebook data leak that took place in April 2021 and affected 600,000 Greek accounts. The questionnaire was randomly assigned to 375 Greeks and was divided into two parts, the first section examined the participant's age, their gender, and the trustworthiness perception about Facebook as well as their attachment towards the platform. In the second part, the respondents were exposed to the information regarding the data leak, and then they had to answer again questions about their attachment, and regarding their usage intention, and the disappointment that this new information generated. The results showed that awareness of a privacy misconduct, as a data leak does not affect the participant's attachment.

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However, the trustworthiness perception about the brand does play a significant role in consumer's attachment towards the brand.

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Chapter 1-Introduction

1.1 Background

After the introduction of smartphones, the way that people spend their daily routine has radically altered from its roots. Currently, most people build their everyday plans and responsibilities through their mobile phones. It seems like nowadays; these devices and their functions are essential tools and hence they may adjust many aspects of most people's daily habits without even realizing it. It is very common for smartphone users to consent to terms and conditions or privacy policies to browse to a website or app, but at the same time avoiding spending time to read these documents and evaluating whether they should accept to share their data or not. Furthermore, these data are used by multiple platforms for the consumer to see personalized ads on their screens. For example, in 2012 Facebook was working along with a data mining organization to prove to marketers that the ads on the social network bring in sales. The platform bought data on 70 million US households, enabling firms to customize advertisements based on consumers' purchases, without the need of the consumer "like" to their page. Still, most people have a vague sense of the extent that brands gather and use their personal information to create ads. For example, no more than 20% of individuals understand that they share their message history, IP addresses, and browsing history when using a basic web browser (Kim et al., 2018).

Furthermore, it is interesting that people tend to be more aware of the importance of corporate social responsibility than they were in the past and pay attention to the morality of the brands. Unethical ways of profit are no longer averted by the audience and brand misconduct seems to have serious consequences for the brand-consumer relationship. Think about Nike's disreputable

labor systems in developing countries, due to the Internet and social media, such company moral mistakes directly generate public scrutiny (Bolton et al., 2021). Brand misconduct relates to actions of a brand owner that critically let down consumers' expectations of the brand causing a strong public impact and often results in negative consumer responses to the brand (Huber et al., 2010). Acts of brand misconduct can be product or service-related errors as well as socially or ethically debatable actions (Huber et al., 2010).

In a world of ubiquitous communication and unlimited use of smartphones, it is substantial to examine the trustworthiness of the tools we constantly use to connect. The extensive use and enhanced functionality of smartphones have made them attractive targets for privacy infringements and malicious activities (Gates et al., 2014). A single mobile device can operate data collection and enable sharing among various entities, including wireless providers, mobile operating system providers, handset manufacturers, application developers, analytics companies, and advertisers to a degree that has never been seen before in the desktop environment (Federal Trade Commission, 2013). Elmer, for example, claims that exactly because of the "decentred and networked aspects of information technologies", even the idea of consumer "choice" is highly formed and controlled (Elmer, 2003).

The classic definition by US-based academics defines information privacy as the right of people to control, edit, manage and delete information about themselves, and to decide when, how, and to what end their data is communicated to others (Westin,1968). In a more modern definition, information privacy has been described as individuals' right or need to monitor or influence the collection, use, and transfer of their personal information by parties engaged in e-commerce (Belanger & Crossler, 2011). Hence, communication tools, such as smartphones, apps,

and social media, have been in the spotlight for the privacy issues they generate through their products and services, and this creates a huge ethical concern around the technology and the brands that fail to protect their customers.

To understand better the psychology of the consumer and their reactions on several occasions of misbehavior we need to analyze the four elements that can play a major role in consumers' decision making when it comes to their data and tools that dominate in their everyday life: (1) brand misconduct, (2) consumer trust, (3) consumer relationship with smartphones and (4) privacy. There have been several research studies concerning brand misconduct and misbehavior that have depicted negative reactions from the customer side and economic consequences for the company (Huber et al., 2010). Also, studies regarding consumer trust, show that several factors may contribute to the development of a long-lasting and trustworthy relationship with consumers, such as brand age and expertise (Zhang et al., 2017), while it is apparent that trust is one of the most impactful tools for marketers (Berry, 1996). On the subject of smartphone usage, academics argue that people tend to show addictive behaviors towards their mobile phones (Barnes et al., 2019). Although another research proved that smartphones also perform as a stress-relief and comfort to their users (Bachar et al., 1998). Nevertheless, emerging technology inventions may benefit our society in various ways, but researchers try to emphasize the fact that the privacy problems engendered due to such technologies are in the biggest existing issues of the marketing area and stress the attention to generate regulations that will protect consumer data (Ferrel, 2016).

Little is known about how brand misbehavior and brand misconduct in the privacy context affect consumer behavior. My thesis will delve into consumer behavior towards the companies that fail

to protect their customers' data or misuse these data for marketing reasons and will try to get into the understanding of the customers' attachment with the brand. Do they accept the current privacy practices or they would demand more regulations for the companies that handle their data? Likewise, my thesis aims to discover whether awareness of the existing privacy flaws impacts consumers' habits and attitudes towards the tools that misbehave in data issues. Although there are several studies for both privacy and brand misconduct, there is little evidence regarding consumer feelings after the acknowledgment of the exploitation how their attachment is influenced by privacy issues. Also, there is no reference to the effect of consumer trust on this relationship. Hence, my thesis will examine the ethical side of brand misconduct in privacy issues and how this affects the customer-brand relationship. More specifically it will examine whether the attachment of individuals alters after the acknowledgment that certain brands exploit the ignorance regarding the flaws of the existing data systems and provide poor privacy policies. Finally, I will use as moderator the gender of consumers and I will also test if consumer disappointment has a significant effect on the relationship between privacy issues and consumers' usage intention.

1.2 Academic and managerial relevance

This thesis research question can have a significant academic contribution, since it will cover topics on a very broad and significant issue that has previously focused solely on privacy, with emphasis on the potential effects of privacy in consumers' life and purchase intentions. However, limited attention has been paid to the effects that privacy issues may have on consumers' attachment and consequently to the service providers that use poor privacy practices. Moreover,

brand misconduct seems to have a direct relation with privacy issues, since the methods that consumers' data are used can easily be considered unethical. Hence, since there is a need to examine the moral side of the existing privacy methods, it is vital to test how gender affects consumers' attachment and whether such practices generate consumer disappointment. On the other side, this research will offer insights to managers and marketers to comprehend how the perception of the firms' credibility is important to consumers when it comes to their personal information and whether the awareness of such unethical privacy policies has negative or positive effects on brand attachment. In case this research confirms that privacy issues indeed diminish brand attachment, the companies must enhance their privacy policies at the most preferable level, to retain their audience.

1.3 Research Question

To cover the gap from the previous literature the below question is formulated:

Research Question: Does brand attachment weakens due to companies' misconduct in privacy issues?

Chapter 2-Literature Review

The current chapter will present previous literature on the subject of this thesis. The purpose of this thesis is to effectively contribute to the following academic literature. First, we introduce the effect of brand misconduct on consumer behavior, second the consumer trust on consumer behavior, then the relationship between consumers and their smartphones, and finally the

privacy issue. This chapter will assist in realizing the existing gaps in the literature that will be filled by this thesis.

2.1 Brand Misconduct

Brand misconduct relates to misbehaviors of a company or brand that does not meet consumers' expectations and often result in negative consumer responses to the brand. Brand misconduct has not always legal consequences or does not always relate to illegal actions of a company, but to immoral activities, or behaviors that do not respond to consumers' anticipations. There have been several research studies concerning brand misconduct, but little is known about how brand misbehavior and brand misconduct in the smartphone environment affect consumer-brand behavior and consumer-smartphone behavior. Dawar and Pillutla (2000), mention in their research for the Impact of Product-harm Crisis in Brand Equity, that brand misconduct is not only related to product attribute defects, but it goes beyond product issues. A previous investigation before and after brand misconduct has tried to reveal whether it has a direct effect on repurchase intention (Huber et al., 2009). This research was conducted in jeans brands and has shown that brand misconduct can lead to damaging consequences and therefore can hurt the economic situation of the company, but on contrary to what was expected, deterioration due to brand misconduct is higher when there is a high relationship quality between the brand and the consumer. Lindenmeier et al. (2011), have examined the effects of unethical corporate activity on the emotions of consumers and subsequent boycotting behavior. Their study also indicates gender differences in the likeliness of boycotting a brand because of immoral activities. Klein[a] et al. (2004) conducted a study on corporate social responsibility and consumers' motivations to

boycott discovered that the egregiousness of the company's action plays a vital role in the customers' behavior. The more extreme the misconduct of customers is perceived, the more likely it is for the consumer to be disappointed and hence, participate in boycotts. Furthermore, this boycotting behavior is acting as a reward for the self-esteem of the participants, since it helps them avoid guilt and respond to their social obligations. Klein[b] and Dawar (2004), also support that corporate social responsibility plays a significant role for consumers, it leads to ascriptions of blame and can have an impact both in brand evaluations and purchases intentions. The study suggests that while a positive image of a brand's CSR might not differ from a neutral image, a poor CSR image places the firm in a disparaging position. Besides, Bolton et al. (2021), investigate how Power Distance Belief influences the consumer's responses to a company's moral transgressions and the findings propose that people with a higher power of distance belief do not always have low standards on the brands' corporate social responsibility. These responses may also be affected by the level of empathy of a person or the victim's salience and how the company manages such crisis, whether they prefer to stay inactive, give an apology, or a remedy.

Although researchers have studied deeply the definition of brand misconduct, but especially brand misbehavior, their findings are restricted to the consequences of such behaviors to the company and the likeliness of the retention of a consumer. In my point of view, there is a need to explore how consumers perceive the misuse of their data, which can be considered as an ethical matter and hence misbehavior or misconduct of a company, even though it does not certainly form a legal issue. In addition, it is essential to discover the aspect of the consumer and how they intend to use tools that may exploit their personal information.

2.2 Consumer Trust

A principle in the given content of a company or organization that enhances word-of-mouth and positively affects the purchase intentions of customers. Customers are more likely to buy from people they trust and believe that their products-services would properly serve their needs. Berry (1996) declares that trust is one of the most impactful relationship marketing tools of a company, while Spekman (1988) suggests that consumer trust is an outcome of a long-lasting brand-consumer relationship. Likewise, Reichheld and Schefter (2000) position trust as an essential premise, for a company to earn customer loyalty. Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) tried to comprehend which behaviors and practices build up or diminish consumer trust and what methods and tools alter consumer trust into value or loyalty. The findings endorse a multilateral viewpoint of credibility assessments along with operational competence, operational benevolence, and problem-solving orientation. However, a brand's unethical behavior may influence consumer trust, if the consumer perceives the brand as credible due to the old-age or due to previous experiences with it, they may be positively biased in the interpretation of the events, so that they can remain consistent with their past beliefs and perceptions. Hence, older brands are more likely to be forgiven in cases of unethical behavior than younger ones (Zhang et al., 2017). Another study indicates that a brand's trustworthiness has stronger effects on consumer choices, rather than expertise. Also, brand credibility (trustworthiness and expertise) has an impact on consumer choices over perceived risk, information costs saved, and perceived quality in most industries (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Early studies indicate that simply knowing that a famous personality advertises various products is enough to wear down consumers' views of the trustworthiness of both endorser and the brand. Moreover, Tripp et al. (1994), in their study

in The Effects of Multiple Product Endorsements by Celebrities on Consumers' Attitudes recommend that when a celeb endorses as many as four products, their credibility, and likability, as well as their attitude toward the brand, may weaken. Finally, trust has always been extremely influential for uncertain environments, such as Internet-based e-commerce and the lack of it has been hyped as one of the main causes for shoppers not participating in e-commerce activities (Pavlou, 2003).

The literature contributions above, have certainly contributed to the understanding of the importance of consumer trust in the marketing area and how brands should act to maintain their loyalty base. However, little is known regarding the activities that might shake consumers' trust and generate doubts about the brands. Moreover, it is vital to examine the impact of consumer trust in the current issue of privacy and understand whether consumer trust acts positively for a company that accidentally or on purpose misuses the personal information of its audience.

2.3 Consumers and Smartphones

Smartphones have gained rapid and global popularity since 2007 when Apple introduced their first iPhone. In comparison with the mobile phones back then, iPhone and all the later smartphones launched by Apple's competition deeply revolutionized the way people perceived mobile phones. Smartphones offer a variety of features (telephone, camera, GPS), which previously would be delivered through multiple devices, and thus, smartphone usage has soared over the last decade (Carolus et al., 2018). A survey conducted in 2014 revealed that 64% of American adults stated that they owned a smartphone, and 46% of those emphasized that they would not be able to live without it (Darcin et al., 2016). There have been continuous studies

around smartphones and the relationship between them and their users, many of whom support an addictive behavior from the user towards their smartphone. Further, Barnes et al. (2019) claim that smartphone addictions are possibly more vital to examine than the problematic use of the Internet, as the former devices tend to also provide a computing platform with better compactness than other devices such as laptops and tablets. Hence, this dependence may be way more severe. Imar de Vries (2009) on "The vanishing points of mobile communication" points out that wireless connectivity gives people the delusion that space is trivial and that the strong bonds between people and their mobiles show their inclination to idealize mobile devices as sources of ubiquitous connection. Another study relates smartphone addiction to materialism. More precisely, this research was conducted among 748 middle school pupils in China and revealed that smartphone addiction has a positive impact on adolescent materialism, while self-esteem mediates this connection (Wang et al., 2018). Moreover, although there are several concerns on digital technology use and the mental well-being of adolescents, a modest time spent in front of a digital screen is not essentially harmful to young people (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017). It is known that young children often develop special bonds with objects, like blankets and teddy bears, this helps children to deal with discomfort and moments of stress (Passman, 1977; Winnicott, 1953). However, adults are too capable of developing emotional bonds to materials that have similar behavioral purposes as children's attachments to objects (Bachar et al., 1998; Keefer et al., 2014). Likewise, consumers tend to expect to generate several positive outcomes from the use of their smartphones such as social interaction with loved ones or informational updates, immediately and consistently (Aoki and Downes 2003; Oulasvirta et al. 2012). Melumad[a] and Pham (2020) argue that smartphones are often used to serve psychological comfort for their

holders. The findings of their research support that people tend to seek for their smartphones when they get into stressful situations and especially people with high levels of stress tend to be the ones that would reach their phone most quickly. Furthermore, they unveiled that not only do smartphones offer psychological relief and comfort, but also compared to other devices with the same functionalities this relief comes solely from completing a task on the smartphone device. Additionally, consumers tend to share more personal information with their smartphones than with their laptops or PCs. This enhanced disclosure on smartphones derives from superior feelings of emotional comfort that consumers correlate with their phone and the comparative complexity of producing content on other devices which focuses the attention on the disclosure task. Finally, it is implied that the more personal and intimate the nature of the smartphone-user relationship the more heightened the purchase intentions (Melumad[b] & Meyer, 2020). Not only have emerging technologies such as smartphones transformed the ways that consumers think and interact with each other but also have altered the decision-making of consumers and sometimes the recommendation systems designed by marketers may interfere with welfare (Melumad[c] et al., 2020).

It is clear from the mentioned literature that smartphones play a vital role in their users' daily life. They generate addictive behaviors, but they can also put their owner out of a harsh position very easily, acting as a relief from stress and psychological comfort. Moreover, a close user-smartphone relationship is capable of enhancing the purchase intention of the user. Still, there is no significant evidence regarding how smartphone technology contributes to the present privacy concerns and how consumers act towards their personal information when in the use of their smartphones.

2.4 Privacy issues

Privacy is recognized as a fundamental human need and provides individuals with autonomy, freedom, and time for self-evaluation and secure communication (Westin, 1968). Even from 1994, Bloom et al. in their research regarding new information technologies emphasized the attention that has to be given to avoiding violating the privacy data of consumers, to be used for marketing purposes, and suggested broader regulation and legislation system (Bloom et al., 1994). At the moment, people tend to be more concerned about their offline privacy, than their online activities' confidentiality. Trepte et al. (2015) cite that this may be caused due to people's lack of literacy on the subject of online privacy issues. Currently, personal data on the online environment are used as marketing tools to serve the profitability and marketing returns of the brands, as well as their competitive position in the market. However, such activities enhance customers' data vulnerability, or perceptions of exposure and weakness to prevent themselves from harm due to unwanted uses of their data. Thus, customers often have negative reactions through data collection which can lead to abnormal stock returns and damaging customer behaviors (Martin et al., 2017). Ferrel (2016) mentions that privacy is one of the biggest issues in the marketing environment and that with all this information available, hackers may target everyone. Further, he recommends that research needs to identify the necessary data that is needed from consumers, and then discover efficient ways to safeguard them. Privacy is complex due to three factors: information may exist longer than needed, because of the low cost to store it, data may be used multiple times for purposes different than the initials, and finally, the personal data for a specific person are very likely to include information about other individuals, too (Davenport et al., 2020). A study undertaken by the Pew Research Center proved that over

half of app users refused to install a cellphone app when they realized the amount of personal data would be collected from them and 30% of app users uninstalled an app on their cellphone because they learned that it collected personal information they did not wish to share (Jan Lauren Boyles et al., 2012). Chen and Wen (2019) researched smartphone use and the privacy paradox in a sample of Taiwanese university students, which revealed that most Taiwanese and Korean students were more likely to lack recognition of the risks and crises from exposure to online management. While subjects from individualist societies like Australia and the U.S., especially females, exhibit greater anxiety upon feeling targeted online. Buck et al. (2014), suggest that even if consumers be aware of the situation and capable of searching for evidence about the information, they share with the applications they are using, they would only discover a small part of the truth. Consumers are proved to have significant heterogeneity in privacy preferences. On the one side, some people prefer to reveal their data and purchase behavior so that they can get companies' incentives, such as lower prices and more accurate product suggestions, while others choose to safeguard their anonymity by not sharing their information (Taylor, 2004).

Likewise, Goldfarb and Tucker (2012) noticed that younger people tend to avoid disclosing information regarding their income. Finally, a survey conducted by Pew Research Center (Madden and Rainie, 2015) proved that firms of the online environment are the least trusted entities for guaranteeing the safety and privacy of their consumers' information. "When asked about search engine providers, online video sites, social media sites, and online advertisers, the majority felt "not too confident" or "not at all confident" that these entities could protect their data."

The above literature assists in the deeper knowledge of privacy concerns and consumer behavior in regards to their personal information. Though, to my knowledge, there is limited evidence on the matter of consumers' attachment when it comes to tools that use debatable privacy practices. Moreover, in my opinion, it is essential to determine what the consumers' response is to such practices, and what the results are to their psychology and brand attachment.

Chapter 3-Theoretical Framework

Brand misconduct relates to the misbehaviors of a company and can lead to negative economic outcomes and generate boycotting behavior as well as affect the purchase intention of the consumer. According to Lindenmeier et al. (2011), it is more likely for a female to boycott a brand that acted immorally, than for a male. Another factor that may affect the boycotting behavior of the participants in the egregiousness of the company's activity while boycotting acts as a reward for the self-esteem of the participants. (Klein[a] et al., 2004) Furthermore, Corporate Social Responsibility plays a significant role, only when it creates a negative image for the company (Klein[b] & Dawar, 2004) and the level of empathy, victim salience, and how the company will manage the situation plays a significant role in how consumers will respond to such misbehaviors (Bolton et al., 2021).

Trust is considered to be one of the most powerful means of marketing (Berry, 1996). A value that can increase the credibility of a brand seems to be their age and years of expertise. As a result, older brands are more likely to be forgiven in cases of unethical behavior than younger ones (Zhang et al., 2017). However, trustworthiness seems to be more impactful than expertise in consumer choices (Erdem and Swait, 2004). Finally, a brand that uses celebrities to advertise

its products-services needs to be very careful about the person they will choose since celebrities that advertise more than three brands and products seem to be non-trustworthy and make the brand and ad seem unreliable too (Tripp et al., 1994).

Smartphones have revolutionized everyday life and many people declare that cannot live without them. Researchers have suggested that smartphones generate addictive behaviors in their users and Vries (2009), recommends that people idealize mobile devices as sources of unlimited communication. Moreover, smartphones seem to have a direct effect on young people's materialism (Wang et al., 2018), but on the other hand, a modest time spent in front of the screen, is not always harmful to adolescents (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017).

Nowadays, people tend to be more concerned about their offline privacy than online. This is probably an outcome of illiteracy regarding online privacy issues (Trepte et al., 2015). Companies tend to use consumers' online data as marketing tools to enhance the profitability and competitiveness of their brands, but this enhances the vulnerability of the audience and can lead to negative perceptions and behaviors towards the brand (Martin et al., 2017). Additionally, people tend to uninstall apps that require data they do not wish to share (Jan Lauren Boyles, 2012). Another study showed that subjects from individualist societies, especially females are more anxious regarding their activities online, (Chen & Wen, 2019), while Buck refers to the fact that even if the audience was aware of the situation in online privacy, they would only know a very small part of the truth (Buck et al., 2014).

 Considering all the above, there have been several research studies concerning brand misconduct, consumer trust, smartphones, and privacy issues. However, little is known about

how brand misbehavior and brand misconduct in the smartphone environment affect consumer-brand behavior. My thesis will explore these topics, to examine whether consumers avert from brands that cannot protect their privacy or misuse their data for marketing purposes and on the other side how brands should take into account this consumer behavior to improve their policies and privacy regulations.

Moreover, to my knowledge, there is little evidence regarding consumer behavior after the acknowledgment of the exploitation of their data. Hence, my thesis will examine the ethical side of brand misconduct in privacy issues and how this affects the customer-brand relationship and the willingness to reuse brands that exploit the ignorance regarding the flaws of the existing data systems. Finally, I will use as moderators the gender of consumers, the brand attachment, and the brand age to analyze whether it influences the audiences' actions after the discovery of a brands' misbehavior.

Chapter 4-Hypotheses

As aforesaid Huber et al. (2010) states that brand misconduct can lead to very harmful consequences in the image and the economic situation of a company and can have negative consequences on consumer behavior. For this reason, I would like to explore whether this pattern is occurring in cases of privacy misconduct and how this influences the connection of the consumers with the brand. Hence, I suggest that consumers' attachment with companies that have acted unethically concerning privacy and personal data, diminishes after the publicity of the incident. And consequently, that immoral privacy policy behaviors lead to consumer

disappointment which discourages future usage intention. A tool could be the company's website, e-shop, app, or even a device.

H1: Consumers' awareness of a company's questionable privacy policies harms their attachment to the brand.

H2: The effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is negatively influenced by disappointment.

Previous research has shown gender differences in the reactions after brand misbehavior. In particular, females are more willing to boycott a brand that has participated in immoral activities than males (Lindenmeier et al., 2011). Therefore, I would suggest that female consumers are less tolerant to companies that have depicted behaviors of personal data exploitation, and hence they tend to have low attachment with such brands.

H3: The effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is higher for females than males.

Chapter 5-Conceptual Framework

The below conceptual framework is developed to depict the relationship between the relevant independent variables and the dependent variable and to recommend potential mediating and moderating effects. Besides, it illustrates the connection between the variables to explain how they relate to each other.

 (RQ)*: Does brand attachment weakens due to companies' misconduct in privacy issues?*
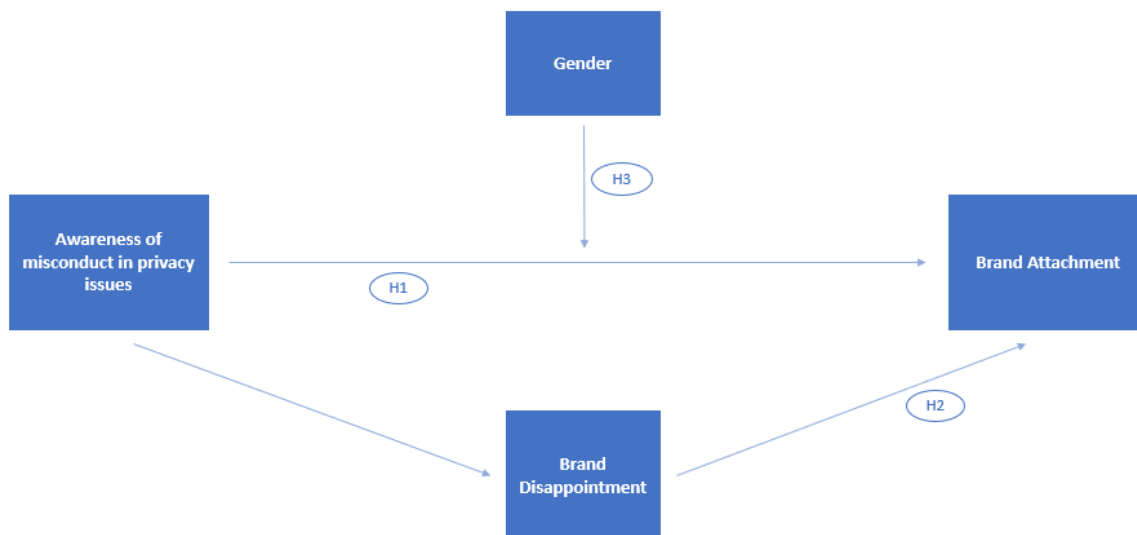
Figure 1: A hypothesized conceptual model of the effects of misconduct in privacy issues on brand attachment

Chapter 6-Methodology and Data

6.1 Methodology

The purpose of my study is to analyze whether consumers accept the privacy practices of the companies that may occupy a big part of their daily routine, or they do demand proper regulation systems that will protect their personal information. Furthermore, my thesis will try to discover which behavior they adopt towards the firms that use dubious privacy policies. More precisely, this research will examine whether their attachment is influenced by such misconduct in privacy issues or not.

To test my hypotheses, I used quantitative research to collect primary data through an online survey. The online survey adapted items described in the literature review and aimed to collect

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a snapshot of the consumers' attitudes towards corporate unethical behavior around privacy and more specifically whether their attachment falters, after the acknowledgment of a privacy incident.

6.2 Procedure

The respondents of the online survey were exposed to an article by the Guardian and one by Greek Reporter revealing Facebook's recent data leak. Before reading these clippings, the participants needed to reply to questions concerning their connection with the platform, their trustworthiness perception about the platform, and their attachment with the platform. After being exposed to the information of the articles the respondents were asked whether they were aware of this incident and then they were invited to answer again about their attachment with the platform, their usage intention, and the level of disappointment experienced after learning about the data leak. The questions before and after showing the clippings aimed to help me identify whether there was a difference in their attitude towards Facebook after reading about the privacy incident and if this is related to the disappointment they experienced with the firm.

6.3 Variables and Measures

Age: The age of the participant acts as a control variable and it is measured in 8 categories: Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+. Using control variables will ensure all important factors for the Dependent Variable are considered in the analysis. The age of the participant will be measured with a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for Under 18 and 7 for 65+.

Trustworthiness_Perception: The participant's perception about Facebook's reliability is measured through a question that evaluates the level of trust they have in the platform. The respondents were asked how they perceive Facebook, and they were given 7 choices: Extremely Unreliable, Moderately Unreliable, Slightly Unreliable, Neither Unreliable nor trustworthy, Slightly Trustworthy, to Extremely Trustworthy. This variable will be measured with a 7-point Likert-Scale where 1 stands for "Extremely Unreliable" and 7 for "Extremely Trustworthy".

Awareness: The independent Variable, Awareness, represents the main effect of the privacy issue on the Dependent Variable, Attachment. The awareness of the respondents is assessed after their exposure to the information about the data leak by questioning whether they knew about the incident or not. Awareness is measured as a binary variable, the respondents that were aware of the privacy issue are depicted with the values 0 and the ones they were unaware of the incident are represented by the value 1. It is expected that the unaware participants will have stronger reactions after the realization of the issue since the ones that were informed would have undergone this experience when they first came to know about the event. Hence, I included only the unaware participants in my analysis.

UsageIntention: UsageIntention measures the level that participants want to use Facebook after their exposure to the data leakage. More precisely, after reading the articles regarding the data leak, the participants were asked to evaluate the chances to "Keep as much distance as possible from the platform" and "Cut off the relationships with the platform". I measure the usage intention via a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 is extremely unlikely and 5 is extremely likely. The questions were based on a study by Tan et al. (2021). To compute this variable in SPSS I took a mean of the responses in statement 1 and statement 2 mentioned above. The statements about this variable give a negative meaning, so the variable needed to be reversed (UI = 6- UsageIntention).

Female: The Independent Variable Female, examines whether the gender of the participant moderates the effect of privacy issues, in this case, Facebook's data leak, on their attachment. The survey includes five values: female, male, non-binary or third gender, other and prefer not to say. This variable is measured as binary, where 1 stands for female and 0 for else.

Attachment_Before: The Independent Variable Attachment examines the level of connection of the participant with Facebook. In the survey, I ask the respondents regarding their attachment with Facebook before and after reading the articles. I measure the attachment using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for Not at all and 7 for Completely. Firstly, the participants needed to answer a Likert-scale question which includes 10 statements: "To what extent is Facebook part of you and who you are?", "To what extent do you feel personally connected to Facebook?", "To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to Facebook?", "To what extent is Facebook part of you?", "To what extent does Facebook say something to other people about who you are?", "To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook often automatic, coming to mind

seemingly on their own?", "To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook come to your mind naturally and instantly?", "To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook come to mind so naturally and instantly that you don't have much control over them?", "To what extent does Facebook automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future?", "To what extent do you have any thoughts about Facebook?". These questions are based on research by Park et al. (2010) on brand attachment and are supposed to form a complete picture of the participant's feelings and attitudes towards the brand, and hence their attachment with the brand. To examine the attachment, I needed to diminish dimensionality and create one variable that includes information for all statements. For this reason, I used the mean of the individual variables generated by this question, to measure the Attachment_Before.

Attachment_After: After their exposure to the article, I used the same Likert scale to ask them again a selection of the stronger assertions of the previous badge of questions "To what extent is Facebook part of you and who you are?", "To what extent do you feel personally connected to Facebook?", "To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to Facebook?". Using a question that needs answers to a lot of statements twice, can be tiring for the participants and lead to incomplete or invalid answers. Therefore, I chose to question again only the statements that portray the strongest feelings and attitudes towards Facebook. It helped me keep the participant focused on the survey and in parallel measure whether the Attachment of the participants was diminished after their exposure to the data leak.

Attachment: Since some of the participants had already undergone the experience regarding the data leak, it was rational that the Attachment_Before and Attachment_After would not have a

significant change after reading the clippings from the articles. Hence, it was necessary to examine only the participants who were not aware of the data leak. To do so, I restructured the data to show only the participants that had Awareness=0, then I created a new data set where I took into account their Awareness, after the exposure to the articles, which would then be 1, and I merged the two files. The new data set was created in a way that each participant would appear twice, once with Awareness value 0 and Attachment value the Attachment_Before and once with Awareness value 0 and Attachment value the Attachment_After.

Disappointment: The Independent Variable Consumer disappointment examines whether the disappointment of the participant with Facebook mediates the effect of privacy issues, in this case, the Facebook data leak, on their attachment. In the survey, I ask the respondents about their disappointment about Facebook after being exposed to the information about the leak. I measure the disappointment using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for "Not at all" and 7 for "Completely". The questions started to assess the disappointment of the participants is based on previous research (Teck Ming Tan et al., 2021) and where the following: "To what extent does Facebook break the promise made to you?", "To what extent does Facebook let you down in a moment of need?", "To what extent does Facebook fail to support you?". These questions are supposed to examine sufficiently the condition that the data leak led to negative feelings towards the brand and the essence of betrayal. To examine disappointment, I needed to diminish dimensionality and create one variable that includes information for all statements. For this reason, I used the mean of the individual variables generated by this question, to measure the disappointment.

Female_Awareness: The independent Variable, Female_Awareness, represents the interaction effect between the variable Female and Awareness and it is computed as Female*Awareness.

Chapter 7-Results
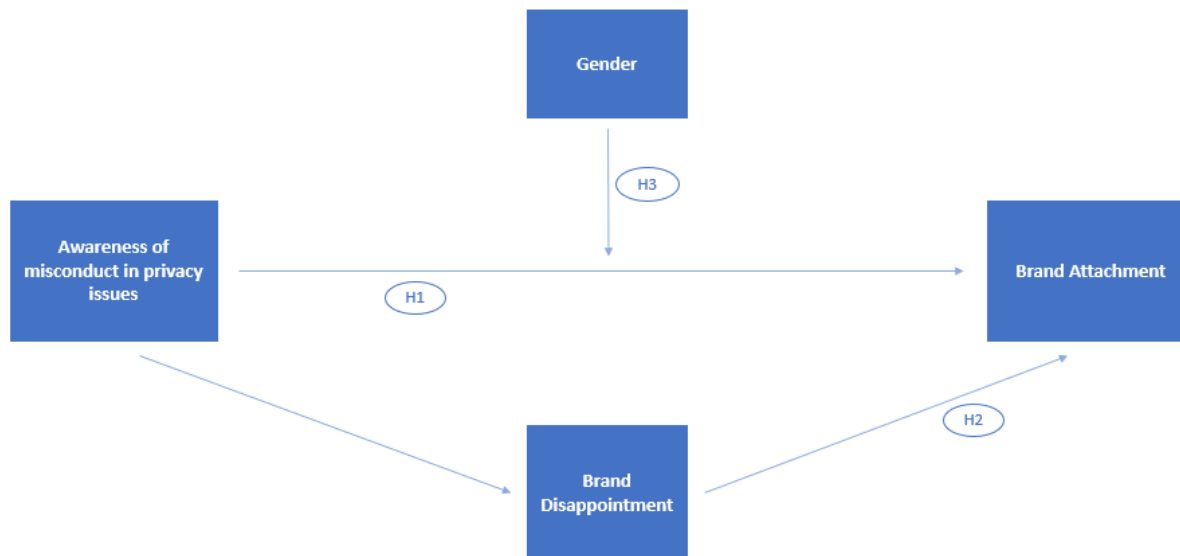
Conceptual Framework

To test my hypotheses, I had to run a multiple linear regression including the control variables, the main effects, and the interaction effect, so that I can generate an unbiased estimate of the coefficients in interest. In this way, I ensured all the variables that may affect my Dependent Variable (Attachment), were taken into account. *Table 1* represents the results of this regression. The interpretation of the results will be mostly based on this table, considering a significance level alpha(a) = 5%.

7.1 Sample

Based on Qualtrics' sample size calculator using a 95% confidence level, the population size of Greece, and a margin of error of 5%, an adequate sample size for the specific research is 385 respondents. The selected population occurred due to the fact that this Facebook incident had a vast effect on the country since the data of 600,000 Greek accounts were exposed during this leak. Hence, the specific location will drive more accurate results for my study. The survey was randomly distributed to a sample of 485 people from Greece.

7.2 Pre-treatment

After gathering the data, I cleaned the responses so that I can obtain a valid sample. In the initial part of the questionnaire, 10 people did not understand the concept of the survey and denied giving consent to participate. Thus, I had to remove them from my sample, since they did not contribute to the study. Of the 475 participants that did proceed to the main part of the questionnaire, 100 did not fully complete it, so I had to remove them from the data set, to maintain only the answers that provided information to the entire survey. Hence, 375 people participated in this study and represent the final sample.

7.3 Descriptive statistic

The age of the participants varies from 18 to 65+ with the majority (141 respondents) being between 25 and 34 years old (Exhibit 2). The final sample included 173 females, 199 males, 2 non-binary, and one who chose not to share their gender identity (Exhibit 3). Only 13 participants replied that they do not own a Facebook account (Exhibit 4), while on regards to awareness 226 knew about the incident while only 149 discovered it through the questionnaire (Exhibit 5). 131

out of 375 participants were neutral about their trustworthiness perception about Facebook and responded, "Neither unreliable nor trustworthy" (Exhibit 6), the mean value of this variable is 3.29 with a standard deviation of 1.352 (Exhibit 8). The mean value of Disappointment is 4.7973 with a standard deviation of 2.06082, hence the responses were relatively far from the mean (Exhibit 7). The mean value of UsageIntention is -5.8093 with a Standard Deviation of 4.01055, which indicates that the answers were widely spread around the mean (Exhibit 9). The sample is distributed through respondents with a Mean equal to 2.655 and a standard deviation of 1.26545 (Exhibit 10). Finally, the R squared suggests that 10.6 of the total variance in attachment has been described in the model (Exhibit 11)The age of the participants varies from 18 to 65+ with the majority (141 respondents) being between 25 and 34 years old (Exhibit 2). The final sample included 173 females, 199 males, 2 non-binary, and one who chose not to share their gender identity (Exhibit 3). Only 13 participants replied that they do not own a Facebook account (Exhibit 4), while on regards to awareness 226 knew about the incident while only 149 discovered it through the questionnaire (Exhibit 5). 131 out of 375 participants were neutral about their trustworthiness perception about Facebook and responded, "Neither unreliable nor trustworthy" (Exhibit 6), the mean value of this variable is 3.29 with a standard deviation of 1.352 (Exhibit 8). The mean value of Disappointment is 4.7973 with a standard deviation of 2.06082, hence the responses were relatively far from the mean (Exhibit 7). The mean value of UsageIntention is -5.8093 with a Standard Deviation of 4.01055, which indicates that the answers were widely spread around the mean (Exhibit 9). The sample is distributed through respondents with a Mean equal to 2.655 and a standard deviation of 1.26545 (Exhibit 10). Finally, the R

squared suggests that 10.6 of the total variance in attachment has been described in the model

(Exhibit 11)

Table 1

Coefficients

Model	Estimate	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% CI LL	95.0% CI UL	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-.022	.507		-.043	.966	- 1.019	.976		
Female_Awareness	.063	.283	.022	.222	.824	-.494	.620	.323	3.100
Female	-.223	.205	- .088	- 1.086	.278	-.627	.181	.474	2.109
Awareness	.166	.205	.066	.809	.419	-.237	.569	.476	2.100
Trustworthiness_perception	.153	.053	.164	2.884	.004	.049	.258	.966	1.036
Account	1.297	.362	.203	3.588	.000	.586	2.009	.975	1.026
Disappointment	.106	.043	.154	2.483	.014	.022	.191	.809	1.236
Age	.117	.052	.136	2.255	.025	.015	.219	.855	1.170

a. Dependent Variable: Attachment

Table 1: Effects on Attachment

7.4 Awareness

To test **H1** (Consumers' awareness of a company's questionable privacy policy harms their brand

attachment.), I needed to examine the effect of Awareness on Attachment. Awareness was

represented by the survey question "Were you aware of this incident?", where the participants

that already knew about the Facebook data leak explained in the articles, would answer "Yes",

and the ones that discovered this information throughout the survey procedure would answer

"No". The respondents that were not aware of the data leak are the ones that could give accurate

data of their reaction about the incident, since the aware ones, would have already gone through

this experience in the past. So, it is expected that the Attachment_Before and Attachment_After

of the exposure to the clippings, would not alter for the aware respondents and they would not

add value to the outcome. Hence, those respondents were excluded from the analysis.

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Next, I had to restructure the data to portray only the participants that answered "No" (Awareness=0), with the value of Attachment being the same as Attachment_Before. Then I had to create a new SPSS datasheet that would depict the same participants, after the exposure of the clippings, so the value of Awareness would change to 1 and the Attachment would be the Attachment_After. After that, I merged the files for each participant to appear twice in my datasheet, once with Awareness=0 and Attachment=Attachment_Before and once with Awareness=1 and Attachment=Attachment_After. The other variables remained the same.

The results in *Table 1* reveal that contrary to what was expected, Awareness does not have a significant impact on the level of Attachment, since Sig.=.419 > a = 0.05. That means that **H1** cannot be confirmed based on the specific analysis. More specifically, consumers' awareness of a company's questionable privacy policies does not seem to harm their brand attachment.

7.5 Disappointment

Table 2

One-Sample Test

					95% CI	
				Mean		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
Disappointment	35.682	374	.000	3.79733	3.5881	4.0066

Table 2: One-Sample T Test, Disappointment

Table 3

Coefficients

					Collinearity
Model		t	Sig.	95.0% CI	Statistics

| | | Std. | | | | Lower | Upper | Toleran | |
	Estimate	Error	Beta			Bound	Bound	ce	VIF
1 (Constant)	.329	.506		.651	.516	-.666	1.324		
Disappointment	.091	.036	.136	2.543	.011	.021	.160	.900	1.111
Age	.130	.050	.134	2.593	.010	.031	.228	.953	1.049
Account	.807	.382	.108	2.113	.035	.056	1.559	.988	1.012
Trustworthiness _perception	.138	.053	.136	2.597	.010	.034	.243	.938	1.066

a. Dependent Variable: Attachment_After

Table 3: Effects of Disappointment on Attachment

To examine **H2** (The effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is negatively influenced by disappointment.) I needed to use the initial sample, including all participants, since at the point of the survey that I ask about Disappointment, they have all read the articles regarding the data leakage and their Awareness status is 1. Then, I had to first investigate whether Disappointment is significantly different than 1 which represents the "not at all" answers in the survey. For this reason, I performed a one-sample t-test, using Disappointment as the Test Variable and the number 1 as the Test Value. The results of the one sample T test are highlighted in **Table 2** and indeed, Disappointment appears to be significantly different than 1 "not at all", since Sig. (2-tailed)< a=.05.

To complete my analysis regarding the effect of Disappointment I had to run an additional linear regression, again using the data of the initial sample, including all participants. The Dependent Variable is now Attachment_After since Disappointment is only examined after the exposure to the incident of the data leakage and the Independent Variables is Disappointment and the controls Trustworthiness, Age and Account. The findings in **Table 3** reveal that the effect of Disappointment is statistically significant, Sig.= .011 < a=.05. However, it is interesting that the effect of Disappointment shows an Estimate of .091 > 0, which suggests that the higher the

disappointment of the participant, the higher their Attachment towards Facebook. Additionally, the effect of Trustworthiness_perception, Account and Age seem to be statistically significant, with Sig.=.010, .035, .010 < a= .05 and Estimates = .138, .807 , .130 > 0 that show a positive impact on Attachment_After. Thus, although that disappointment has a significant impact on brand attachment, we cannot conclude that the effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is negatively influenced by disappointment since the effect seems to have a positive direction. Hence, **H2** is not confirmed.

7.6 Gender

To assess **H3** (The effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is higher for females than males.), first I needed to recode the data generated from the question "What is your Gender?" to a different variable. Hence, I created the variable Female, where the Females were depicted with the value 1 and all else with 0. Then I needed to create the variable which would test the moderation effect of Female on the relationship between Awareness and Attachment. This is the variable Female_Awareness (Awareness * Female). Both variables were included in the multiple linear regression, which results are depicted in *Table 1.* The outcome highlights that the effect of Female on Attachment is not statistically significant, Sig.=.278 > a=.05 and neither is the interaction effect, Female_Awareness, Sig = .824 > a=.05. Thus, the outcome highlights that Gender does not influence the relationship between the data breach, and the brand attachment of the respondent and subsequently, **H3** (The effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment is higher for females than males.) is again, not validated.

7.9 Controls

The control variables Trustworhiness_perception, Age, and Account, assisted to ensure that all important factors that may affect the Dependent Variable, Attachment, are involved in the analysis to generate the most accurate outcome possible. ***Table 1*** exposes that all three variables seem to have a statistically significant impact on Attachment, since the significance level for Trustworthiness_perception is Sig.= .004 < a= .05, for Age Sig.= .025 < a=.05, and Account Sig. < a=.05 and the results show a positive effect of the control variables on the Attachment, since Estimate > 0. Hence, the perception about Facebook's trustworthiness, their age, and whether they own a Facebook Account monitor their attachment towards Facebook when privacy misconduct occurs.

Chapter 8-Conclusion

8.1 Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of my research and the main outcome. Firstly, the purpose of this study was to answer the following question "Does consumers' attachment weakens due to companies' misconduct in privacy issues?". To answer this question, I used the scholarly theory of four fundamental elements that are interrelated with this subject, brand misconduct, consumer trust, the consumer-smartphone relationship, and privacy issues. Huber et al. (2010) declare that brand misconduct drives damaging effects in the image and the economic situation of a company. Kleina et al. (2004) in their study about CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and consumers' motivations to boycott discovered that the level of cruelty of the unethical action plays a vital role in the customers' reaction to misconduct issues. On the other

side, Zhang et al. (2017) state that a brand's unethical behavior would only impact consumer trust, if the consumer perceives the brand as credible due to previous experiences with it or its age. This may generate a positive attitude over the brand, however the egregiousness of their actions. Finally, Huber et al. (2010) claim that especially consumers with high relationship quality with the brand tend to respond negatively to brand misbehaviors. Hence, I would declare that brand attachment has an impact on usage intention. Based on this literature, I recommend that the effects found on brand attachment could also be translated to effects on usage intention.

Previous research has delved into several issues of misconduct and how it affects the behavior of consumers. Likewise, the topic of privacy issues has been mainly analyzed from the perspective of the consumers' response to data collection. Yet, the theory has neglected the fact that false privacy policies, can be concerned with an immoral issue and hence, misconduct of the company, and additionally, does not focus on the attitudes such misconduct generates towards the brand. This is a gap that I try to tackle with my study. In contrast to the expectations of my study, the online survey results came to overrule the hypothesis in which I assume consumers that are aware of privacy issues have a weakened attachment towards the brand. The knowledge of the Facebook data leak does not significantly affect the connection of the participants with Facebook.

Moreover, on the contrary to my suggestions, gender appears to not be a moderator between the relationship of awareness and attachment. To recap, I assumed that the effect of awareness of questionable privacy policies on brand attachment would be higher for females than males, however neither the effect of gender (female) nor the effect of the interaction effect (female * awareness), are proved significant. Hence, gender does not moderate the relationship between awareness and brand attachment. Additionally, I suggested that disappointment generates a

negative indirect effect of awareness on the brand attachment but based on this analysis this was not validated, even though the effect of disappointment is statistically significant.

On the other hand, whether someone has a Facebook Account and the trustworthiness perception towards the platform have a significant effect on the attachment. More specifically, the greater the trustworthiness perception, the greater the attachment towards the platform. This is a noteworthy result and could be related to Zhang et al.'s (2002) study, which supports that the effect of misconduct may be relatively insignificant, because of the positive effect of the previous experiences with the brand. Another interesting finding that could also correlate with this theory, is that however the disappointment of the participants indeed influences the brand attachment, it seems that on higher levels of disappointment the attachment rises too. Finally, one more remarkable result is that the age of the participants has a significant effect on the attachment, the higher the age of the consumer, the higher the attachment with the platform. This might imply that as people get older tend to become more attached to the tools they use in their daily life and will not easily change to another platform, in comparison to younger generations that may perceive these tools as a practical tool of their everyday routine.

These are useful findings for firms that generate data for marketing purposes. Corporations can benefit from the fact that positive experiences with a brand can lead to ignorance of privacy misbehaviors. It is suggested that brands should give reasons to be trustworthy, for privacy mistakes to be neglected by their customers. However, although awareness of privacy issues does not seem to play a significant role in the attachment with a brand, that does not mean that the exploitation of the data is an issue that consumers are not concerned about. Especially brands that target young individuals should consider utilizing data policies that do not outstrip privacy

boundaries. This will assist in maintaining their audience. Since the topic of privacy issues is getting more and more attention, it is a matter of time for consumers to change their attitude towards such misconduct. Hence, brands should also alter their privacy policies to provide relevant marketing advertisements to the right audiences, but on a level that this would not interfere with consumers' confidentiality.

8.2 Limitations and future research

To my knowledge, this study is the first one concerning privacy issues as a brand misconduct topic and how it influences the attachment of consumers to the brand. Thus, it includes various limitations as well as prospects for further discoveries. One common limitation that academics tend to cope with, is normality. To use linear regression analysis, the collected data must be normally distributed. However, in real life, the data collected from a sample cannot always depict the population perfectly. In my case, the collected data were not far from the normal distribution, and the normal curve was close to a perfectly normal curve. Therefore, I proceeded with the analysis of the data generated from the online survey.

The second limitation is regarding the nationality of the sample since it included only Greek participants. The objective of this study is mainly dedicated to privacy issues and misconduct. However, the online survey was focused on the privacy issues of Facebook, a platform that tends to be an integral tool of Greeks' everyday life. Moreover, people who live in Greece, do not have a strong understanding of the aspects of online privacy and the possible consequences of such a data breach. Results may be altered when using a more experienced sample with regards to privacy. Thus, future studies that will examine similar topics, may gather information from a

sample that does not include any restrictions in Nationality or should focus on a population that is more knowledgeable about technological facts.

The third limitation is concerning the online survey. This method has both advantages and weaknesses. The benefit is that the participants can respond to the questionnaire from a place that is comfortable for them under nonstressful conditions and without the pressure of the presence of the researcher. On the other hand, this does not allow the latter to control for external influences, such as distractions during the response times (e.g., another person enters the room, noises from the outside, etc.). Another suggestion for further studies is that it would be beneficial for future researchers to survey specific environment setting such as an academic classroom, where distractions could be restricted.

Finally, although I did not measure the effect of awareness of misconduct in privacy issues directly on usage intention, the theory by Huber et al. (2010) implies there is an effect of brand attachment on usage intention. Hence, the impacts revealed in this study can be interpreted as effects on usage intention. Nevertheless, it would be interesting for future academics to assess these effects that I tested in my research on brand attachment directly on usage intention.

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Table of Figures

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Appendices

Exhibit 1: Moderation Effect - Female

Clustered Bar Mean of Attachment by Awareness by Female

Error Bars: 95% CI
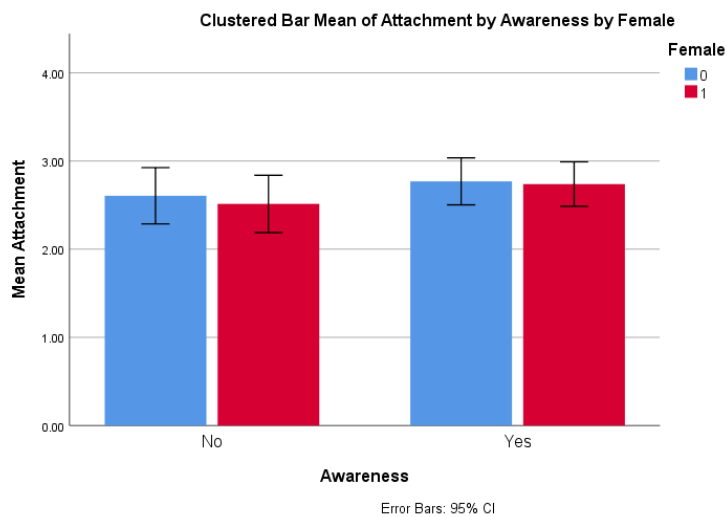
Exhibit 2: Age Frequency

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	2	.5	.5	.5
	18 - 24	74	19.7	19.7	20.3
	25 - 34	141	37.6	37.6	57.9
	35 - 44	38	10.1	10.1	68.0
	45 - 54	62	16.5	16.5	84.5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
55 - 64	50	13.3	13.3	97.9
65+	8	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Exhibit 3: Gender Frequency

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	173	46.1	46.1	46.1
	Male	199	53.1	53.1	99.2
	Non-binary/third gender	2	.5	.5	99.7
	Prefer not to say	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Exhibit 4: Facebook Account Frequency

Account

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	13	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Yes	362	96.5	96.5	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Exhibit 5: Awareness Frequency

Awareness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	149	39.7	39.7	39.7
	Yes	226	60.3	60.3	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Exhibit 6: Trustworthiness Perception Frequency

Trustworthiness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely unreliable	39	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Moderately unreliable	82	21.9	21.9	32.3
	Slightly unreliable	65	17.3	17.3	49.6
	Neither unreliable nor trustworthy	131	34.9	34.9	84.5
	Slightly trustworthy	38	10.1	10.1	94.7
	Moderately trustworthy	18	4.8	4.8	99.5
	Extremely trustworthy	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	

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Exhibit 7: Disappointment Mean

Disappointment

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
4.7973	375	2.06082

Exhibit 8: Trustworthiness Perception Mean

Trustworthiness

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3.29	375	1.352

Exhibit 9: Usage Intention Mean

UsageIntention

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
-5.8093	375	4.01055

Exhibit 10: Normality

Simple Histogram of Attachment

Mean = 2.655
Std. Dev. = 1.26545
N = 298
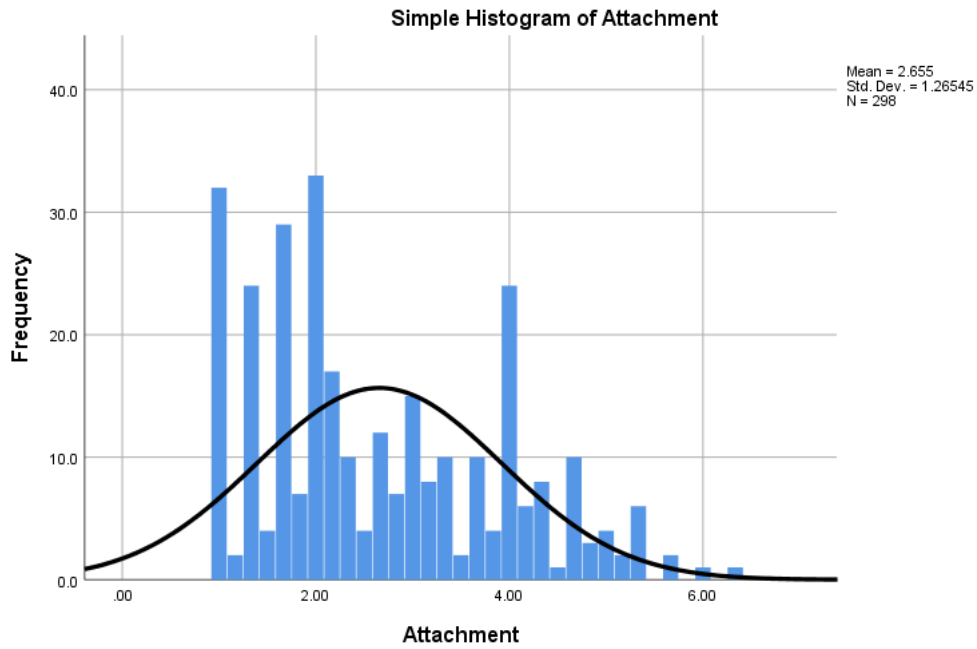
Exhibit 11: Model Summary

Model Summary

Mode l	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.325ᵃ	.106	.084	1.21124	.106	4.830	7	286	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Awareness, Trustworthiness_Perception, Account, Female, Disappointment, Female_Awareness

Survey Appendix

Dear respondent,

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey. My name is Danai Stavropoulou, and this is part of my thesis research for my master's in Marketing at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam.

Participation in this questionnaire is anonymous, and the data acquired will be used solely for academic purposes.

It should take approximately 5 minutes to complete the survey.

If you have any questions, please send me an email at 572203ds@eur.nl.

Kind regards,
Danai

I understand the above and agree to participate in this survey:

◉ Yes

○ No

→

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What is your age?

○ Under 18

○ 18 - 24

○ 25 - 34

○ 35 - 44

○ 45 - 54

○ 55 - 64

○ 65+

○ Prefer not to answer

What is your gender?

○ Female

○ Male

○ Non-binary/third gender

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

Where are you from?

○ Greece

○ Other European Country

○ Non-European Country

○ Prefer not to answer

→

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Do you own a Facebook account?

○ Yes

○ No

How do you perceive Facebook

○ Extremely unreliable

○ Moderately unreliable

○ Slightly unreliable

○ Neither unreliable nor trustworthy

○ Slightly trustworthy

○ Moderately trustworthy

○ Extremely trustworthy

→

Please answer the questions below concerning the extent to which the following statements express your attitudes and feelings towards Facebook.

	Not at all	Too little	Slightly too little	Neither too much nor too little	Slightly too much	Too much	Completely
To what extent is Facebook part of you and who you are?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel personally connected to Facebook?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel emotionally	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

To what extent does Facebook say something to other people about who you are?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook come to your mind naturally and instantly?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook come to your mind naturally and instantly?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Facebook come to mind so naturally and instantly that you don't have much control over them?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent does the Facebook automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

To what extent do you have many thoughts about Facebook?

  ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

→

On the next page, you will find two passages written by the news websites, The Guardian and Greek Reporter, regarding one of the latest Facebook data leaks. Both articles were published in April 2021.

Please take some minutes to read them carefully and answer the following questions.

→

Facebook data leak: details from 533 million users found on website for hackers

- Information appears to be several years old
- Facebook says leak stems from problem fixed in 2019

▲ Facebook data leak: the personal details of 533 million users, including phone numbers and emails, have been found available on a website for hackers. Photograph: Dado Ruvic/Reuters

Details from more than 500 million Facebook users have been found available on a website for hackers.

The information appears to be several years old but it is another example of the vast amount of information collected by Facebook and other social media sites and the limits to how secure that information is.

The availability of the data set was first reported by Business Insider. According to that publication, it contains information from 106 countries including phone numbers, Facebook IDs, full names, locations, birthdates and email addresses.

Facebook has been grappling with data security issues for years. In 2018, the social media giant disabled a feature that allowed users to search for one another via phone numbers, following revelations that the political firm Cambridge Analytica had accessed information on up to 87 million users without their knowledge or consent.

In December 2019, a Ukrainian security researcher reported finding a database with the names, phone numbers and unique user IDs of more than 267 million Facebook users – nearly all US-based – on the open internet. It is unclear if the current data dump is related to this database.

The Menlo Park, California-based company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a statement provided to other publications, Facebook said the leak was old and stemmed from a problem that had been fixed in 2019.

Greek Reporter:

April 5, 2021

A total of 617,722 Greek individuals' information was taken as part of the breach.

"The exposed data includes personal information of over 533 million Facebook users from 106 countries, including over 32 million records on users in the US, 11 million on users in the UK, and 6 million on users in India," according to a report from *Insider* late on Monday.

→

Were you aware of the specific incident?

◉ Yes

○ No

→

After you first came to know about this data breach:

	Not at all	Too little	Slightly too little	Neither too little nor too much	Slightly too much	Too much	Completely
To what extent is Facebook part of you and who you are?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel personally connected to Facebook?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to Facebook?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the level to which you were likely to do one of the following after you first came to know about the data breach:

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
Keep as much distance as possible between Facebook and you	○	○	○	○	○
Cut off the relationship with Facebook	○	○	○	○	○

After you first came to know about Facebook's data breach:

	Not at all	Far too little	Moderately too little	Slightly too little	Neither too much nor too little	Slightly too much	Moderately too much	Far too much	Completely
To what extent does Facebook break the promise made to you?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent does Facebook let you down in a moment of need?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent does Facebook fail to support you?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

→

Were you aware of the specific incident?

○ Yes

◉ No

→

After reading about Facebook's data breach:

	Not at all	Too little	Slightly too little	Neither too little nor too much	Slightly too much	Too much	Completely
To what extent is Facebook part of you and who you are?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel personally connected to Facebook?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to Facebook?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the level to which you are likely to do one of the following after reading about the data breach:

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
Keep as much distance as possible between Facebook and you	○	○	○	○	○
Cut off the relationship with Facebook	○	○	○	○	○

After reading about Facebook's data breach:

	Not at all	Far too little	Moderately too little	Slightly too little	Neither too much nor too little	Slightly too much	Moderately too much	Far too much	Completely
To what extent does Facebook break the promise made to you?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent does Facebook let you down in a moment of need?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent does Facebook fail to support you?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

→

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