

CLARISSE DE AGUIAR TONIATTI

**EMERGING BRANDING TRENDS IN THE POST-COVID
WORLD**



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Master in Marketing Manager

Supervised by:

Phd Manuela Guerreiro

Master Carla Viana



2022

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Clarisse de Aguiar Toniatti

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(assinatura)

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RESUMO

A gestão da marca é uma área estratégia do marketing altamente complexa e em constante evolução. Fruto de progressivas mudanças no comportamento dos consumidores, cada vez mais voláteis à luz de incontornáveis efeitos provocados por diversos agentes, nomeadamente a globalização dos mercados, as autoestradas da informatização, as novas tecnologias e as redes sociais, os fundamentos clássicos da gestão da marca estão sendo questionados. Esta nova realidade, descrita como o "Mundo VUCA" – caracterizado com adjetivos como volátil, incerto, complexo e ambíguo – traduz um novo contexto em que a gestão mudou drasticamente fruto da necessidade de atuar em cenários marcados pela digitalização, emergência de novos valores e novos modelos de negócios. Assim, desde o início do século XXI que, profissionais e académicos, estão alinhados na defesa de uma abordagem mais dinâmica e inovadora na gestão das marcas.

Todos esses desafios que os profissionais de marketing e os gestores da marca enfrentam são agora acentuados pelos efeitos da pandemia do COVID-19. Alguns dos mais reconhecidos académicos chamam a atenção para a necessidade de repensar os tradicionais modelos de gestão de marketing e *branding*. Ao longo da história, as pandemias que afetaram a nossa sociedade, desde a Peste Negra, na Idade Média, até à mais recente Gripe Espanhola que, no início do século XX assolaram a Europa, trouxeram grandes mudanças sociais e a pandemia COVID-19 tem, e terá, o mesmo perfil de efeitos, desta vez numa escala global. Este é, pois, um momento que requer especial atenção por parte de académicos e gestores de marketing e *branding*, na medida em que a pandemia COVID-19 trouxe impactos profundos e complexos dos quais emergirá um mundo diferente, quer para o consumidor quer para os negócios e as marcas.

É, pois, com o propósito de contribuir para a reflexão no contexto atual que este estudo é levado a cabo. A questão de investigação que norteia esta pesquisa é compreender que novos desafios se colocam à gestão de marcas e que tendências relevantes de *branding*, no entender de académicos e profissionais de marketing, serão consolidadas num mundo pós-pandemia? Daqui discorrem dois objetivos gerais e respetivos objetivos específicos: 1- Compreender como as marcas estão respondendo a algumas mudanças relevantes no atual contexto marcado pelos efeitos da pandemia COVID-19; 1.1 - Identificar as tendências relevantes de *branding* no contexto atual, 1.2 - Identificar quais dessas

tendências já estão sendo colocadas em prática. 2 – Compreender quais tendências de *branding* devem se consolidar no cenário pós-pandêmico; 2.1- Capturar as tendências do *Brand Work Manifesto* (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020) percebidas como as que se tornarão mais relevante no contexto de pós-pandemia: 2.2 – Identificar novas tendências que devem se consolidar no período pós-pandemia.

A estratégia metodológica contempla a revisão literária, uma etapa essencial à definição do enquadramento teórico da gestão marca tendo sido dedicada especial atenção ao novo contexto marcado pela pandemia COVID-19 e ao desenho do modelo de análise que viria a guiar a pesquisa empírica. Considerando que o presente estudo aborda temas ainda pouco explorados e, sobretudo, marcados pelos efeitos da pandemia, optou-se por uma abordagem qualitativa e exploratória através do Método Delphi, com recurso a um painel de profissionais de marketing e branding atualmente a desempenhar funções em Portugal e no Brasil. A recolha de dados decorreu através de inquérito por questionário centrado nos quatro metaprincípios do Manifesto da Marca (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020) identificados e caracterizados através da revisão de literatura: Metaprincípio Aberto (Open): aborda as novas formas da marca gerar valor por meio de um relacionamento aberto e aprofundado com os consumidores e restantes envolvidos; Metaprincípio Ágil: aborda a crescente importância de adotar metodologias e abordagens de gestão da marca ágeis e flexíveis; Metaprincípio Digital: aborda como a revolução digital está transformando a gestão de marcas; Metaprincípio Autêntico: aborda a crescente importância do propósito da marca para gerar valor verdadeiro.

Ao fim de duas rondas, os resultados desta pesquisa permitem destacar que, no entender dos profissionais que integraram o Painel Delphi, a Autenticidade é a dimensão mais relevante e de destaque para se consolidar no mundo pós-pandemia. A COVID-19 aumentou a expectativa de que as empresas devem proteger o planeta e contribuir para uma sociedade melhor. As marcas devem trabalhar para seus negócios e trazer valor para o mundo. Devem ter um propósito e agir coerentemente com ele em todas as instâncias. O Metaprincípio Digital também se destacou como uma tendência relevante e a consolidar, uma vez que os comportamentos de consumo, nas nossas sociedades, se tornaram ainda mais digitais. Experiências complexas de marca por meio de múltiplos canais online e offline, a necessidade de aumentar a capacidade de recolha e análise de dados e a importância de se aprofundar em aspetos como o comportamento digital dos

consumidores, gestão de conteúdo relevante e envolvente, compõem a Dimensão Digital em relação à qual os profissionais devem estar atentos no futuro próximo. Além disso, procedimentos rígidos devem ser abolidos em favor da adoção de princípios ágeis – Metaprincípio Ágil. Atualmente, agilidade e flexibilidade são, ainda, mais importantes em cenários marcados por modelos de negócios flexíveis e resilientes e, portanto, mais capacitados para o lançamento de novos produtos, serviços e experiências. Por fim, o Metaprincípio Aberto é considerado crítico na medida em que, para serem relevantes, as marcas devem trabalhar para (co)criar e partilhar valor com os seus consumidores, estabelecendo relações genuínas com os seus *stakeholders* e, assim, contribuindo para melhorar a reputação e elevar a suas vantagens competitivas no mercado.

Os resultados da pesquisa devem, pois, ser encarados como alertas para o que gestores de marcas e académicos devem dedicar especial atenção no mundo pós-covid. Deste modo, acredita-se que o contributo deste estudo pode ser considerado relevante ao apresentar diretrizes que podem conduzir a gestão de marcas num mundo pós-covid, as quais podem, ainda, ser consideradas como novas avenidas para investigação futura, nomeadamente comparando as perspetivas de gestores de marca e académicos sobre o assunto, assim como testar e confirmar empiricamente, através de estudos quantitativos, as novas tendências de branding pós-covid, em diversos contextos, nomeadamente nacionalidades, setores de atividade, funções de marketing.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19; gestão de marca; *branding*; marketing

ABSTRACT

In the past decades, fundamentals of brand management are being called into question demanding a more dynamic and innovative approach. This challenging scenario has been enhanced by COVID-19, which has brought profound impacts from which a different world will emerge, both for consumers, businesses, and brands. In previous studies, brand management authors claim more flexible, agile, and digitally-focused branding models. Building on this, the purpose of present study is twofold: to explore how the context of COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the emergence or strengthening of new trends in brand management and to identify the trends that should consolidate in the post-covid scenario.

Considering that this study addresses subjects that have not yet been well explored, a qualitative and exploratory approach was applied through Delphi Method. Therefore, was established a perspective, through an information-gathering process, combining the knowledge and experience of a 45 marketing professionals panel, generating a consensus of opinions considering the future of branding in the post-covid market.

Most relevant trends and the prominent ones to consolidate in the post-pandemic world were presented and relevant metaprinciples considered in Brand Work Manifesto by Baumgarth *et al.* (2020) were addressed: Open, the new ways for the brand to generate value through an open and deeper relationship with its stakeholders, consumers, and everyone involved in its ecosystem; Agile, the growing importance of agile and flexible brand management; Digital, how digital revolution is transforming brand management; and Authentic, the growing importance of brand purpose to generate true value.

This subject represents a compelling opportunity for marketers to explore how these social changes are shaping new paths of brand management and to reflect on which relevant branding trends should consolidate and lead the market in the post-pandemic world. Future research should consider academics' perspectives to further explore these topics and test branding trends that really became relevant in the post-covid context.

Key-words: COVID-19; “brand management”; branding; marketing

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The fundamentals of brand management are being called into question, or, at the very least, a more dynamic and innovative approach to brand management is being defended. Veloutsou and Guzmán (2017) analyze branding as a constantly evolving concept with a high level of complexity. And it can be said that brand managers are experiencing it especially in the last decades where brands have been demanded in a very different way than they have been years ago.

In the last few decades, we have experienced even more rapid consumer behavior and market context changes. Boué (2013) managed to capture and translate this reality very well when describing this new world as the "VUCA World" - volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. In fact, the world of brand practice has changed dramatically. Digitalization, changing values and new business models result in completely new questions and challenges for brand management (Baumgarth, 2020).

All these challenges faced by marketers are highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with some analysts calling for a fundamental rethinking of marketing and branding models (Boudet, de Paz & Muller, 2020). Throughout history pandemics, from the black plague in the Middle Ages to the Spanish flu in the early 20th century, have brought about huge social changes (Reevess, Carlsson-Szlezak & Swartz, 2020) and it is certain that COVID-19 will do the same.

This is a moment of attention for marketing academics and executives. COVID-19 has brought profound impacts from which a different world will emerge, both for consumers, businesses, and brands. It is a very recent context, so there are still few studies of branding trends that delve into the pandemic scenario. There are even fewer studies that deepen in projecting relevant branding trends that should consolidate in the pos-covid scenario.

This subject represents a compelling opportunity for marketing academics and professionals to explore how these social changes are shaping new paths of brand management and to reflect which relevant branding trends should consolidate and lead the market in the post-pandemic world. This subject is of great importance for brand management specialists to be alert and prepared for the post covid world that is emerging.

The purpose of the present study is, therefore, twofold: to explore how the context of COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the emergence or strengthening of new trends in brand management and to identify the trends that should consolidate and lead brand managers in the post-covid scenario. Related specific objectives were designed: to identify the relevant branding trends in the current context; to identify which of these trends are already being put into practice by the panelists' companies; to capture trends in the Brand Work Manifesto perceived as most relevant in the post-pandemic period (deductive method); to identify any new branding trends to consolidate in the post-pandemic period (inductive method).

A literary review was carried out in order to (1) deepen the theoretical basis of the dimensions presented in the framework of the article “Brand Manifesto” (Baumgarth, Boltz & Kaibel, 2020) presenting other authors' point of view that reinforces the Manifesto, providing a broader vision about this framework and (2) explore how the new context with the emergence of the pandemic is accelerating the trends presented.

Empirical research of exploratory nature was applied, and the Delphi methodology was chosen since it is useful to better explore little-known areas (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) and to generate an opinion consensus on future facts (Paper, 2015). In this regard, a panel of experts was designed and professionals in the Marketing field with special tasks related to brand management were invited to participate. Informed by the literature review, a questionnaire was designed, and data collection was carried out online. Two rounds of questionnaires were needed to get a consensus. Data analyses were performed in SPSS, version 25, and Excel version 2201. Thus, from the perspective of these professional profiles, brand management trends that stand out in the context of a pandemic and those that seem most promising in a new post-pandemic order were identified.

This Dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 1 is devoted to the introduction where the study's objectives and investigation's research questions are addressed. Chapter 2 is devoted to the literature review, and the theoretical background is discussed. Chapter 3 presents the methodologies and justification for their use. In chapter 4 results are presented and data is analyzed. Also an interpretation of the research results is presented consolidating the framework of the Brand Work Manifesto (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020) and

delivering new insights that are contributing to enriching the framework, using the inductive method. Lastly, chapter 6 presents the conclusions, theoretical and managerial implications, and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Branding in the new era

“Branding consists of the strategic direction for an organization's activities, providing consistency through the connection between positioning, communication, and staff working style/behavior” (Chernatony, 1999: 158). It is a constantly evolving concept with a high level of complexity (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017) that has been passing through significant changes throughout time.

In the last few decades, we have experienced even more rapid consumer behavior and market context changes. Boué (2013) managed to capture and translate this reality very well when describing this new world as the "VUCA World" - volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. In this context, market environments are more and more unpredictable. Baumgarth *et al.* (2020) state that brands must be more flexible and agile to promote progress. Thus, rigid processes must be abolished, and brand management must act according to agile principles.

Digital revolution is a relevant aspect nowadays that is also influencing brand management. Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, (2017) claim that connectivity is probably the most critical element responsible for changes in marketing history. Swaminathan, Sorescu, Steenkamp, O’Guinn & Schmitt, (2020: 3) state that: “The scale of information availability and the speed of information dissemination has grown exponentially as technology that connects people and devices has become widely available and more affordable.” Internet is a powerful tool that has had a significant influence on the change in brands' attitudes. As (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2020) affirms, firms are no longer the primary source of information about brands.

Traditionally, brand management methods were designed for a world where consumers were exposed to (and influenced by) firm-controlled and one-way media (Aaker, 1996). Today, as information becomes available widely across multiple channels, brands' reputation is informed over time by images captured through company-controlled and uncontrolled signaling (Walker, 2010). The input of uncontrolled or semi-controlled signaling is increasing (Veloutsou & Ballester, 2018).

Firms are not the only entities that can quickly and broadly disseminate branded information. Some other relevant stakeholders and consumers are disseminating and positioning a brand. “The rise of networks of people and devices and the development of technology platforms have led to an environment in which brands and their meanings are cocreated.” (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2020: 3). There has been a movement from the monolithic brand building originating from the company to a conversational branding that involves many contributors (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017).

Consumers are increasingly aware of the brands performance and more conscious of the power that their purchasing decision has over the world. Therefore, they seek to know how brands act with their collaborators, consumers, the environment, etc (Holt, 2002). Nowadays, brands must be transparent more than ever, work in an authentic, consistent, and responsible manner (He & Harris, 2020).

In this context of digital, social, and economic revolution, branding becomes more challenging. Veloutsou and Ballester (2018) say that the environment is changing and becoming increasingly global faster than ever. Markets are changing faster, reaction times are shortened, communication channels become more diverse, and brand positioning requires more responsibility. As Baumgarth *et al.* (2020) claim, the framework conditions for brand management are changing. Long-term trends such as technological, socioeconomic and geopolitical are creating a revolution in marketing that makes the 1960s- style 4 Ps increasingly obsolete (Rust, 2020).

Organizations reflecting on this new era will need to re-evaluate their guidelines concerning Brand Management: their visions, missions, and objectives to account for the changes to their customer's competitors, amongst other shifts. (He & Harris, 2020).

2.2 A new framework proposal

This topic provides a conceptual framework to understand better how brands respond to some relevant changes in the new context explained previously. It starts from the framework developed in the article Brand Work Manifesto published by Baumgarth *et al.*

(2020), and then presents other authors' point of view that reinforces the Manifesto providing a broader vision of this framework.

The Brand Work Manifesto Baumgarth *et al.* (2020) results from discussions that took place in panels of experts consisting of marketing and branding practitioners: brand consulting companies, brand agencies, a research institute, start-up, and major corporate brands. In the first workshop, the results of current studies were presented. Based on these results and individual impressions from the practice, the members of the Expert Council collected, grouped and assessed the most significant changes in brand management. Four main categories could be identified in which brand management is likely to change in the future:

1 – Metaprinciple Open: this category addresses the new ways for the brand to generate value through an open and deeper relationship with its stakeholders, consumers and everyone involved in its ecosystem.

2 – Metaprinciple Agile: this category addresses the growing importance of agile and flexible brand management.

3 – Metaprinciple Digital: this category addresses how the digital revolution is transforming brand management.

4 – Metaprinciple Authentic: this category addresses the growing importance of the role of the brand purpose to generate true value.

2.2.1 Metaprinciple Open

Brands are conversations, nowadays more than ever, so they have to offer meaningful participation. Authoritarian, arrogant determining brands are no longer accepted. Brands now generate their value through the appreciation of their customers and stakeholders. They determine what a brand is, what it stands for, and how it develops in the future (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

A relevant brand works to create shared value for its ecosystem. Some academic's studies reinforce the benefits of these relationships through an enhanced reputation that leads to competitive advantages in the marketplace and superior financial outcomes (Jones, 1995; Jones et al., 2018). Their studies are often based on the “Stakeholder Theory”. This theory

defends that firms are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment (Fox, Davis, & Baucus, 2020). Firms (or brands) that are more considerate of the needs and demands of these individuals will experience positive performance-related outcomes compared to firms that are less considerate of their stakeholders (Freeman *et al.*, 2018). Brands should work for their core business and bring value to their ecosystem.

In the current open context relevant brands are concerned about establishing and solidifying their network. A company's internal resources are essential, yet a brand's network is crucial in determining its success. In addition, these networks contribute to a faster and more efficient generation of products and services or an improved exposure (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Co-creation increasingly contributes to a faster and more efficient generation of product or service launches and improvements.

Brands have to work together with their customers, partners, and other brands, to solve the clients' problems (Padilla, 2020). The generation Z values reinforce this statement. In an October 2020 survey by Whunderam Thompson Data, 80% of US generation Z said that brands should help make people's life better, and 82% believe that brands should leave aside their differences and work together for the greater good (Chiu & Safian-Demers, 2021). "The cultural shift from "me" to "we" is extending to brands, demonstrating that changes require collaborative work." (Chiu & Safian-Demers, 2021: 74).

Finally, Baumgarth *et al.* (2020) argue that a brand evolves through the thinking, feeling and action of brand decision-makers. The brand owner has to understand their target audience and their culture and to do so is crucial a direct dialogue with its audience. The brand has to consolidate customer contact and not depend only on external studies.

2.2.2 Metaprinciple Agile

A brand must develop to stay relevant, modern and innovative (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Kotler *et al.*, (2017) argue that marketing should be written *market-ing*, so we should be reminded that marketing must deal with constant external and internal

changes. We can transfer this thought to *brand-ing*. Brand management creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand. Thus, rigid processes must be abolished, and brand management is required to act according to agile principles and banish strict rules (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

Kalaiganam, Tuli, Kushwaha, Lee & Gal (2021) define marketing agility as the extent to which an entity rapidly iterates between making sense of the market and executing marketing decisions to adapt to the market. In this new context, brands are allowed to make mistakes, and so are employees. Letting go, trusting, permitting and training are more important in brand management than directing, controlling, regulating and sanctioning (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

“Flexibility, agility and a willingness to experiment (combined with a readiness to make mistakes) are all components of the new mindset. But this can only work if employees also know and love the brand and are given the freedom to make independent decisions.”
(Boumgarth, *et al.*, 2020: 38)

James Lyski, CMO at CarMax, the leading automotive retailer for used cars in the USA, underscores the importance of an agile and flexible approach to marketing:

“If you wait till you perfect your product, you’re behind the innovation curve. We use an agile development model where teams are constantly iterating. Most of the experiments they do are designed to fail. You learn a lot more from failure than success.
(Kalaiganam *et. al.*, 2021: 36)”

This new mindset stands out as authentic leadership that "involves ongoing processes whereby leaders and followers gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting and genuine relationships" (Fox *et al.*, 2020:2214).

Although agile and flexible marketing approach is considered more and more relevant nowadays, is still a challenge for companies to implement. A survey by

the Boston Consulting Group finds that even though nine of ten marketing executives feel that agility is essential for the marketing function, only one of five considers their firm to be agile (Visser *et al.*, 2018)

2.2.3 Metaprinciple Digital

Data sources are vastly more abundant, mainly due to the proliferation of digital channels and the touchpoints they generate. Brand managers of tomorrow must be aware of all of the innovative approaches to data collection that will improve the process of gathering, processing and interpreting information (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

With the growth of the Internet, web analytics are proposed and combined to give birth to platforms such as crowd-sourcing systems (Doan, Ramakrishnan & Halevy, 2011) that permit organizations to harmonize data, on the one hand, and allow the production of user-generated contents, on the other hand. The web provides collecting, organizing and visualizing data through data mining techniques and tools such as Google Analytics or social media analytics, which provide information on user's preferences and purchasing patterns (Troisi, Maione, Grimaldi & Loia, 2020).

The Internet, especially mobile smartphones, has resulted in an explosion in tracking customers' online behavior. The use of tracking cookies makes it possible for firms to surreptitiously snoop on customers' online behavior at the expense of personal privacy (Kannan and Li, 2017). Attention to ethical guidelines has become more relevant nowadays. For example, concerns about privacy have led to European solid privacy laws that greatly restrict the storage and use of personal information (Perkins and Markel, 2004)

Digital evolution has affected brands in several ways. Swaminathan *et al.* (2020) affirm that branded experiences are significantly more complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand via multiple channels that seamlessly connect. Brands need to offer personal and exclusive experiences both online and offline. Relevant brands should bring concepts to life through interactive communications (Baumgarth, *et al.*, 2020). “Unquestionably, there is a forced acceleration of the digital

transformation agenda as we recognize how quickly customers and employees have embraced digitally-enabled journeys and experiences.” (Balis, 2020: 5).

2.2.4 Metaprinciple Authentic

The role of brands has broadened as we have been observing a significant shift towards responsible and prosocial consumption in the sense that consumers consciously reflect on how to consume and make product/brand choices to be more accountable to themselves, others, the society, and the environment (He & Harris, 2020).

Brands make profit, and with that comes the responsibility of conducting themselves ethically and morally within the market. A brand proposal needs to be seen far more in value propositions, not profit maximization (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). The statement of Megan Jones, VP of January Digital, reinforces the importance of the value proposition of the brand: "People are going to shop differently. They will need to find value in a brand that is not just in a product or a service". (Hays, 2020: 5)

Customers want brands to demonstrate that they are authentic in their dealings with customers, employees and communities. Otherwise, they can take their business elsewhere with the click of a mouse (Yohn, 2020). Consumers are taking strong stances in terms of their values and are demanding that brands do the same. Modern consumers are looking beyond messaging, diving into brands ethics, actions and values (Chiu & Safian-Demers, 2021).

A brand must work for business and bring value to the world. That is, it must have a purpose. The more significant the purpose of the company's business, the more value the brand will have. According to Fracheta (2017) "purpose is an aspirational reason for being, which inspires and provides a call to action for an organization its partners and stakeholders, in addition to providing benefits for local and global society". It is the reason for an organization to exist. A well-founded purpose

reflects and supports the business strategy, creates differentials about the competition, finds an echo with customers, energizes and inspires employees (Aaker, 2015).

For a brand to capture market value, all of its employees, from the receptionist to the CEO, must understand the brand intimately and embrace its values. (Aurand, Gorchels & Bishop, 2005). Successful brand management is characterized by the fact that a brand's behavior and communication correspond to its purpose and are authentic to its customers and employees. It is more important than ever in periods marked by dramatic external changes (Baumgarth, *et al.* 2020).

2.3 How covid is accelerating branding trends

The COVID-19 pandemic put humanity in an unprecedented global crisis as political and business leaders have no primary reference point to an event of this magnitude (Fox, *et al.*, 2020). A recently published piece by consulting firm Deloitte (2020: 2) states that while we have experienced events like 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis, this pandemic is "more global in scope, more profoundly impactful and far-reaching, and more complex than any other crisis that today's decision-makers have experienced or contemplated."

Pandemic interrupted life and economies, forcing businesses and governments to quickly make difficult choices to balance risks preserving individual health and economic health (Manuel & Herron, 2020). As Donthu and Gustafsson (2020: 284) believe: "Once we get through this pandemic, society will emerge in a different world compared to the one before the outbreak." These changes can already be seen and felt by everyone: consumers, stakeholders and brands as they accelerate the trends that we presented previously.

2.3.1 The acceleration of Metaprinciple Open

The pandemic is teaching us a lesson that "we are all in this together", which undoubtedly will raise people's expectation of businesses compromised in solving not only the clients' problems but society and community-relevant issues by building and cocreating with customers, partners among other stakeholders (He & Harris, 2020).

For example, Heinz joined with their partner Magic Breakfast and provided 12 million breakfasts to vulnerable school children during the UK's school closures (Karpen & Corduit, 2020). According to Kanter's research (Hammett, 2020), this campaign is one of the most impactful in terms of brand memorability and creating warmth and love.

Another relevant fact is that some scholars, like He and Harris (2020), believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate even more the relevance of Shared Value trend in the long run, as more and more firms and businesses realize that their long-term survival and development hinges on achieving a delicate balance between profitability and harmony with its various stakeholders.

Economic strain, geopolitical tensions and public health issues are challenges that will persist long after the COVID-19 epidemic has passed its peak. Given the severity of the consequences of failing to act proactively, business leaders need to identify and implement practices that elevate brand responsibility and citizenry as strategic priorities (Yohn, 2020).

2.3.2 The acceleration of Metaprinciple Agile

Berlin start-up brand NAKT, which usually sells clothing for the techno scene, started to produce masks with buckles and chains for the same target group (*Baumgarth et al.*, 2020). Many distillate brands like Diageo, Pernod Ricard, and AMBEV (the largest beer producer in Brazil) started to produce alcohol gel 70% to distribute to hospitals and other health centers (Fernandéz, 2020). They solved the problem of idle capacity making a big difference in their communities.

In this new context, firms create more flexible and resilient business models by considering how newly available resources and capabilities can offer new products and services. Many firms have turned to their employees for ideas, identification of new capabilities, and ways to pivot their operation (*Fox et al.*, 2020).

2.3.3 The acceleration of Metaprinciple Digital

Consumers turned to devices with internet connection to maintain their routines amid the lockdowns that marked the COVID-19 pandemic. Using new technologies, consumers have created new work habits, study, leisure, shopping and socialization (Westbrook & Angus, 2020).

In this context combined realities (physical and digital) were relevant factors in boosting sales in 2020 in addition to enabling data collection (Westbrook & Angus, 2020). Traditional companies are adopting Phygital Reality technologies (physical + digital), implementing processes that encourage customers to visit the place safely, aided by smart devices. Reservation systems, QR codes for menus, contactless payments, and virtual tasters are some of the strategies companies have been implementing (Westbrook & Angus, 2020) to access the brand via multiple channels (online and offline) that seamlessly connect, improving human interactions and enhancing experiences.

Along with the increased relevance of multi-channel management, we have seen an increase in the bearing of data collection and analysis expertise. Brand Managers of the future must understand how data is collected, processed, and interpreted (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Critical analysis and knowledge of the latest approach techniques and collection of this data enhance awareness and engagement.

For example, in 2020, Netflix had the most significant increase in subscribers in its history: 31% compared to 2019 and ended 2020 with more than 200 million subscribers (Sérvio, 2021). Netflix's success is not only due to the confinement experienced during this period, but also due to its expertise in the process of gathering, processing and interpreting information. For instance, the streaming brand collects and analyses data on each user's behavior, customizing the notifications on the opening page and the first search lines, generating greater engagement from its subscribers (Vindi, 2017).

2.3.4 The acceleration of Metaprinciple Authentic

COVID-19 gave companies a chance to build better, develop emotional bonds with consumers and protect the most vulnerable. For consumers, brands must continue to act responsibly and purposefully after the pandemic (Westbrook & Angus, 2020). A study recently carried out by Porter Novelli focused on the reaction of 1200 consumers to various brands showed that two-thirds of respondents said they would consider the company's purpose when choosing what to buy, and 71% say they would buy products from a company driven by a purpose in the place of others with similar cost and quality (Branco, 2021).

A good case of an inspiring action based on brand purpose is the launch of Mattel Playroom with free activities for kids to keep entertained during the pandemic. It includes celebrating new hero figures (#ThankYouHeroes) such as nurses, doctors, delivery drivers and emergency medical technicians that keep people safe and secure through their frontline work during COVID-19. In doing so, Mattel contributes to questioning at an early age of what and who matters in society, providing an opportunity for distraction and reflection in uncertain times while putting in action its brand purpose "inspiring, entertaining and developing children through play" (Karpen & Conduit, 2020).

Pooj Morjaria, founder of Did they Help, an online platform launched in 2020 that scores companies according to "good or bad deeds" claims that "People want more responsibility. There is a renewed sense of purpose. We all took the time to sit down and assess what is important to us. What the brand stands for, its beliefs and values will become as relevant as its products and esthetics (Westbrook & Angus, 2020: 212)." Successful brand management is characterized by the fact that a brand's behavior and communication correspond to its purpose and are authentic to its customers and employees. (Baumgarth, *et al.* 2020).

The expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society has increased. Seize the opportunity to rebuild better. Brands must collaborate and co-create a more sustainable world, promoting the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy, contributing to a more sustainable world, helping to solve social

inequality and environmental issues, working for the benefit of its entire ecosystem (Westbrook & Angus, 2021).

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

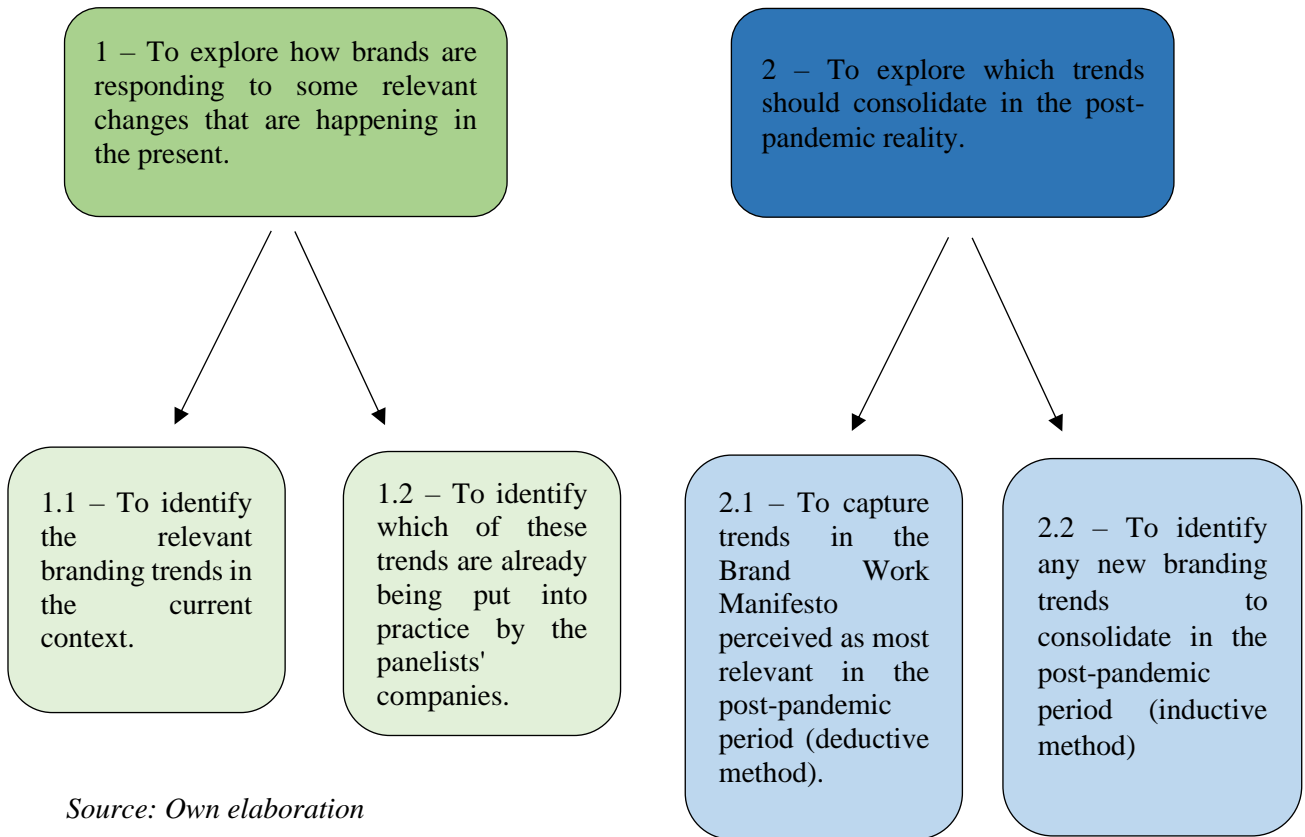
3.1 Objectives of the study

The purpose of the present study is twofold: (1) to explore how the context of COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the emergence or strengthening of new trends in brand management and (2) to identify the trends that should consolidate and lead brand managers in the post covid scenario. Following this, related specific objectives arise:

1.1 – To identify the relevant branding trends in the current context; 1.2 – To identify which of these trends are already being put into practice by the panelists' companies.

2.1 – To capture trends in the Brand Work Manifesto perceived as most relevant in the post-pandemic period (deductive method); 2.2 – To identify any new branding trends to consolidate in the post-pandemic period (inductive method).

Figure 3.1 – Research Objectives



3.2 - Data collection approach

Considering that the present study addresses subjects that have not yet been well explored, a qualitative method was adopted, following Strauss and Corbin (2008) that defend the use of qualitative methods to explore little-known areas, or to explore more deeply something previously known.

This study adopted the Delphi method which was devised in 1948 by “Research and Development” Institute, with the claim to predict future changes or trends (Yeoh, 2019). This methodology emerged as an alternative to the methods of conventional prospecting. It is considered a useful method for eliciting and aggregating experts’ opinions whenever there is a lack of viable or practical statistical techniques (Armstrong, 2001, 2006).

Regarding the objectives of the present study, this methodology was selected because it can establish a study perspective, through an information-gathering process, combining the knowledge and experience of specialists, to generate consensus of opinions on future facts or effects (Paper, 2015).

Rowe and Wright (2001) present four distinct characteristics that usually remain the same on Delphi studies: 1. Anonymity 2. Iteration 3. Controlled feedback 4. Statistical “group response”.

Anonymity: In Delphi studies, the participants usually do not know each other. Anonymity assures that specious persuasion does not occur, since anonymity reduces the effect of dominant individuals (Gracht, 2012). Also avoids unwillingness to abandon publicly expressed opinions (Rowe & Wright, 2001), and leads to higher response rates (Hader, 2002).

Iteration: A second characteristic of Delphi studies is that the procedure is executed in a series of rounds. The judgements of the respondents are summarized by the facilitator and provided as feedback or basic information for the following round. This process is usually reiterated until stability/consensus is attained (Gracht, 2012).

Controlled Feedback: It is termed “controlled” because the facilitator decides on the type of feedback and its provision. After each Delphi round, the survey data is statistically analyzed and re-stated in aggregated form. (Gracht, 2012). Controlled feedback means sending the results obtained to the panel members, to reach convergence (Monfort, 1999).

Statistical “group response”: The statistical group response can be presented either numerically or graphically, and usually comprises measures of central tendency (median, mean), dispersion (standard deviation) and frequency distributions (valid percentage) (Dunn, 2004). Analysis of the data over successive rounds allows for measuring not only the existence of consensus and its strength, but also the convergence of opinions (Gracht, 2012).

One of the fundamental characteristics of Delphi methodology is the prior selection of specialists, according to their knowledge and ability to formulate opinions (Monfort,

1999). For the success of any Delphi study, it is critical to secure the participation of the right panel experts who are directly involved with the issue (Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975). Considering the objectives of this study, a panel composed by marketing and branding professionals who are highly involved with this subject were selected: CEOs, directors, managers, coordinators and senior analysts.

3.3 Design of data collection instrument

The elaboration of a semi-structured questionnaire was one of the fundamental phases of this study. Semi-structured questionnaires are used so that the researcher can keep more of an open mind about concepts and theories that can emerge out of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Bryman, 2012).

The questionnaire was informed by the literature review on the topic to address the four metaprinciples of Brand Manifesto (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Table 3.1 provides an overview of the questions framed in each metaprinciple, addressing the literary review of this study. It included two parts: the first one focused on identifying the most relevant brand management trends within the current context, and the second one focused on pointing the branding trends that should consolidate in the post covid scenario.

To identify the most important trends in brand management, responses were measured using a five-point Likert Scale, referencing previous studies (Hsu & Lin, 2013). Respondents were invited to rank the items of the scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important). Then, using multiple response scales (Yeoh, 2019), respondents were asked to identify the trends already adopted in their companies.

Finally, an open-ended question was added to stimulate brainstorming (Yeoh, 2019) in projecting brand management trends that should be consolidated in the post-covid context. Therefore, deductive and inductive method should be applied to the interpretation of these specific results (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 3.1 Questionnaire Overview

Dimension	Interview Questions	References
Metaprinciple Open	<p>- Evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance. 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important</p> <p>a) Relevant brands generate value through the evaluation of their consumers and stakeholders, who determine what the brand represents.</p> <p>b) A brand gains relevance by working to generate value for its ecosystem.</p> <p>c) Co-creation increasingly contributes to a faster and more efficient generation of product or service launches and improvements.</p> <p>d) To understand its consumer in-depth, the brand must establish direct forms of dialogue with its target and not rely only on research carried out by third parties.</p> <hr/> <p>- Mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work:</p> <p>a) My company has already developed (or is developing) projects that generate true value for its ecosystem (the community where it is inserted, suppliers, customers, among others).</p> <p>b) My company has already developed (or is developing) a product / service or project in co-creation with consumers, customers, partners or competitors.</p> <p>c) My company has already developed (or is developing) channels of direct contact with the consumer and uses these channels regularly to collect and analyze inputs regarding our products / services and launches.</p>	<p>Baumgarth <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Jones, 1995 - Jones <i>et al.</i>, 2018 - Fox <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Freeman <i>et al.</i>, 2018 - Padilla, 2020</p>
Metaprinciple Agile	<p>- Evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance. 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important:</p> <p>a) Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment.</p> <p>b) Flexibility, agility, and the willingness to experiment (combined with the willingness to make mistakes) are the components of the new Branding mindset.)</p> <p>c) Brands can make mistakes, so can their employees.</p> <hr/> <p>- Mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work.</p> <p>a) My company encourages employee participation and proactivity. We feel stimulated to think and act creatively, we are not afraid of making mistakes.</p> <p>b) Our Marketing is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally and is always attentive, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary.</p>	<p>Baumgarth, <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Doan, Ramakrishna n, & Halevy, 2011 - Troisi <i>et al.</i>, 2020 – Swaminathan <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Balis and Janet, 2020</p>
Metaprinciple Digital	<p>- Evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance. 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important:</p> <p>a) Brand Managers of the future must understand how the data is collected, processed and interpreted, through a critical analysis and knowledge of the latest techniques of approach and collection of this data.</p> <p>b) Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to ethical guidelines is becoming more and more important.</p>	<p>Baumgarth, <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Doan, <i>et al.</i>, 2011 - Troisi <i>et al.</i>, 2020 –</p>

	<p>c) Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.</p> <p>- Mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work:</p> <p>a) We are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis.</p> <p>b) My company developed and shared with all employees directly involved, the ethical guidelines for data collection and analysis.</p> <p>c) We offer several channels (online and offline) through which our consumers and partners can contact our company.</p> <p>d) There is an area or person responsible for managing the integration of all brand communication channels, ensuring positive brand experiences.</p>	<p>Swaminathan <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - Balis and Janet, 2020</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Metaprinciple Authentic</p>	<p>- Evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance. 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important:</p> <p>a) The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world.</p> <p>b) The more relevant and noticeable its purpose, the more value the brand will have.</p> <p>c) A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees.</p> <p>- Mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work:</p> <p>a) My company is guided by its purpose, always maintaining its coherence in the way of relating to its employees, consumers and the environment.</p> <p>b) My company has a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers.</p>	<p>Baumgarth, <i>et al.</i>, 2020 - He & Harris, 2020 - Hays, K., 2020 - Yohn, D. L., 2020 - Aurand <i>et al.</i>, 2005</p>

Source: Authors' elaboration based on literature review

The questionnaire was prepared in English and translated into Portuguese by native bilingual speakers in both languages. Both the original and the translation versions were double revised by two academics in marketing and branding and then pre-tested with five marketing executives before final application. The objective of this screening was to check that the questionnaire was easy to understand and to assess clarity and usefulness of the measurement items and scales

3.4 – Panel of experts

For the success of any Delphi study, it is critical to secure the participation of the right panel of experts who are personally involved with the issues approached in the study (Yeoh, 2019). It is for these reasons that this study considered individuals who are strongly involved with brand management. Purposive sample was used, where sampling

is conducted considering the research goals so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012).

The panel of this study was composed of professionals with experience in Branding/Marketing. Two criteria were defined for the selection of panelists: 1- At least four years of experience in the area; 2- Exercise strategic functions. To achieve a relevant accession of professionals within the defined profile, the network of the researcher and academic experts was of paramount importance. In this way, the panel was composed in a balanced way with professionals from Brazil and Portugal. Most were Marketing Managers (40%), followed by Marketing Directors (29%), Analyst/Specialist (16%), CEOs (11%), and finally Executives (4%). See Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Panel of Experts

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	24	53
	Female	21	47
	Total	45	100
Nationality	Brazil	28	62
	Portugal	17	38
	Total	45	100
		Frequency	%
Age	Between 30 and 39	20	44
	Between 40 and 49	18	40
	Between 50 and 60	4	9
	Between 20 and 29	2	4
	More than 60	1	2
	Total	45	100
		Frequency	%
Job Title	Manager	18	40
	Director	13	29
	CEO	5	11
	Analyst	4	9
	Specialist	3	7
	Executive	2	4
	Total	45	100

The sample size of the panel of experts was, in the first round, composed of 50 participants and, in the second round, 45 participants formed the panel, since 5 of them did not participate in the second phase.

3.5 Data collection procedures

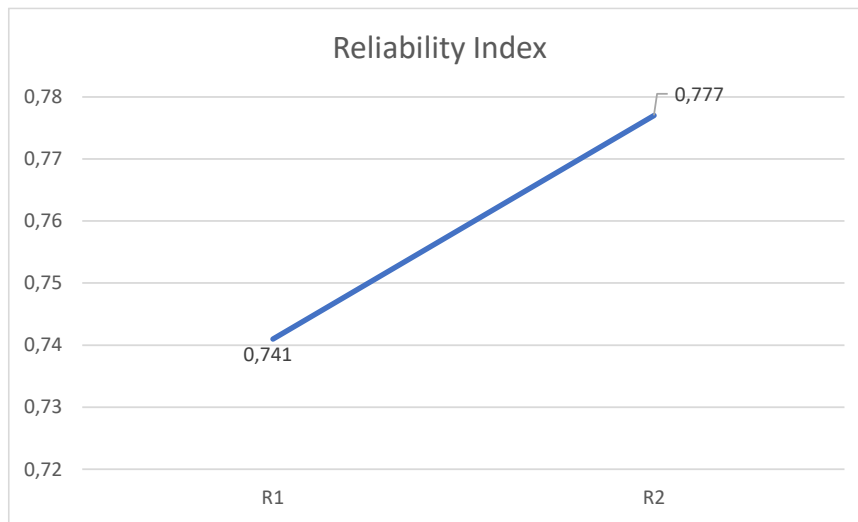
Questionnaires were designed and applied on Google Forms. A personalized e-mail was sent to each panelist with a brief text explaining the purpose and methodology of the research and with the link with the questionnaire to be answered. Anonymity among the participants was guaranteed. Each respondent's responses were summarized by the facilitator and provided individually as feedback or background information for the next round.

The number of rounds of the study followed the stability criterion defended by Dajani, Sincoff & Talley, 1979: 84, defined as “the consistency of responses between successive rounds of a study”. Chaffin and Talley (1980) and Scheib, Skutsch & Schofer (1975) similarly recommended using stability as a measure of when to stop a Delphi survey. According to these criteria, two rounds were performed for this research. The first round took place in June/July 2021 and the second one in September/October 2021.

The present study analyzed descriptive statistics to determine stability, using percentage (Dajani *et al.*, 1979; Yeoh, 2019), and combination of mean and standard deviation (Florstrand, Pitt & Kietzman, 2020). Gracht, 2012 describes this combination as one of the most used to measure stability.

The reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) was used to determine the reach of stability. Landis and Koch (1977) define: small reliability – values between 0 and 0,21; reasonable reliability – values between 0,22 and 0,4; moderate reliability – values between 0,41 and 0,6; substantial reliability – values between 0,61 and 0,8; perfect reliability – values between 0,81 and 1. Considering these criteria the present research presented substantial reliability index: 0,741 in the first round increasing to 0,777 in the second one.

Figure 3.2 Reliability Index (Cronbach's Alpha)



3.6 Data Analysis

Responses recorded on Google Forms were exported to Excel 2201, and after codification, data were exported to into SPSS 25. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentage), location measures (mean), and dispersion measures (standard deviation). Finally, Mann-Whitney test was used to determine if branding trends of each Metaprinciple were rated differently considering two groups: Brazilians and Portuguese. This test was selected by comparing two independent samples when the result is not normally distributed, and the samples are small (Greve, 2014; Wayne & LaMorte, 2017).

The open-ended question was analyzed using thematic content analysis in Excel 2201. Deductive and inductive methods were adopted since it used as support concepts already existing in the study's literature and new topics which hadn't been explored before were presented enriching the actual framework.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Results: Relevant branding trends in the current context

The first part of the present study worked with Likert scale, asking the participants to evaluate the importance of each trend presented in the current context, ranking the scale items from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important).

There is a general understanding that since Likert scales have properties of interval scales there are arguments in favor of considering them as continuous interval scales (Munn *et al.*, 2014; Lattin, Carroll & Green, 2003). In this regard the degree of resultant measurement error is not significant and, therefore, it is possible to develop arithmetic operations (such as averages, or mean evaluation).

Following Florstrand *et al.* (2020), this study considered the evolution of mean and standard deviation as the variants that determine the stability closure of the most relevant trends. To get the relevant trends in the current context, the items “4-Very Important” and “5-Extremely Important” were grouped and, in the same vein, location measure mean that reached over 4 points, was considered appropriate (Hsu & Lin, 2013). Finally, the study analyzed the variation of the mean and standard deviation of the Likert scale evaluations. Referencing Chaffin and Talley (1980) and Scheibe *et al.* (1975) the final trends considered relevant in this study should present a variation in their statistics within a 15% interval to consider the reach of stability.

Considering that the evaluation of these trends kept mean values above 4 with a variation of the mean and standard deviation within the range of 15%, it was determined the reach of stability at the end of the second round. Table 4.1 presents the relevant branding trends in the current context incorporated into each of the four metaprinciples according to the Brand Work Manifesto (Baumgarth, *et al.*, 2020).

Metaprinciple Authentic was considered the most relevant dimension, having its Likert Scale mean evaluation increased from 4,65 to 4,69 in round 2. All statements received high mean evaluation (above 4,5). “A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees” was the most relevant trend with 4,73 mean evaluation in the second round. Statement that mentioned the importance of having a relevant and noticeable purpose for brand value received the lowest (but still relevant) mean evaluation: 4,66 in round 2.

Metaprinciple Digital was evaluated as the second most relevant dimension performing a Likert Scale mean evaluation of 4,50 for both rounds. “Brand experience complexity in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels” was considered the most relevant trend by the panelists with 4,57 mean evaluations in round 2, although this value decreased 0,6 points from the first round. “Brand Managers of the future must understand how data is collected, processed and interpreted, through a critical analysis and knowledge of the latest techniques of approach and collection of this data” must also be highlighted as a relevant trend. It presented a significant increase in mean evaluation from 4,45 to 4,55 in round 2.

Metaprinciple Agile was also evaluated as the second most relevant dimension. Its Likert Scale mean evaluation had a significant increase from 4,43 to 4,50, although it performed only two trends considered relevant. “Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment” was the most relevant performing 4,53.

Metaprinciple Open was in the third place performing a Likert Scale mean evaluation of 4,42 for both rounds. “A brand gains relevance to generate true value for its ecosystem” was ranked as the most relevant statement, performing a mean evaluation of 4,64 in round 2. The less relevant trend evaluated in this Metaprinciple refers to the increasing of co-creation importance. It presented a mean evaluation of 4,29.

The Mann-Whitney test was used to determine if branding trends of each Metaprinciple are rated differently considering two groups: Brazilians and Portuguese. Regarding this, two hypotheses were formulated:

H0 – Branding trends **are not rated significantly differently** between Brazilians and Portuguese.

H1 - Branding trends **are rated significantly differently** between Brazilians and Portuguese.

SPSS 25 was used to calculate p value that must be compared with the significance level ($\alpha = 0,05$) (Greve, 2014; Minitab, 2022; Fernandes *et al.*, 2016). Considering that Mann-Whitney test calculates difference equality between the medians (Greeve, 2014), following premises should be followed (Minitab, 2022; Fernandes, Gonçalves, Guerreiro & Pereira, 2016):

p value $\leq \alpha$: The difference between the medians is statistically significant (**reject H0**)

p value $> \alpha$: The difference between the medians is not statistically significant (**embrace H0**)

Since most trends below show p $> 0,05$, hypothesis (H0) was confirmed. Then Brazilians and Portuguese evaluate the statements relevance in the same way. The exceptions are those described in the table 4.1 p $< 0,05$.

Table 4.1 - Branding Trends Performing

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC – Mean R1: 4,65 Mean R2: 4,69									
Statements	Mean			Standard Deviation			Mann-Whitney (p value)		
	R1	R2	Variation	R1	R2	Variation	P R1	R2	Result
Q12.3-A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees.	4,71	4,73	0,6%	0,610	0,539	-11,5%	0,011	0,004	Significant Differences Both Rounds
Q12.1-The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. A brand must have	4,65	4,67	0,4%	0,594	0,564	-5,1%	0,053	0,008	Significant Differences in R2

purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world.									
Q12.2-The more relevant and noticeable its purpose, the more value the brand will have.	4,61	4,66	1,0%	0,695	0,635	-9%	0,002	0,002	Significant Differences Both Rounds
METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL – Mean R1: 4,50 Mean R2: 4,50									
Statements	Mean			Standard Deviation			Mann-Whitney (p value)		
	R1	R2	Variation	R2	R2	Variation	R2	R2	Result
Q10.3-Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.	4,63	4,57	-1,2%	0,564	0,625	10,8%	0,006	0,003	Significant Differences Both Rounds
Q10.1-Brand Managers of the future must understand how the data is collected, processed and interpreted, through a critical analysis and knowledge of the latest techniques of approach and collection of this data.	4,45	4,55	2,2%	0,786	0,675	-13,7%	0,108	0,769	Non Significant differences
Q10.2-Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to	4,43	4,37	-1,4%	0,640	0,679	6,1%	0,137	0,049	Significant Differences in R2

ethical guidelines is becoming more and more important.									
METAPRINCIPLE AGILE – Mean R1: 4,43 Mean R2: 4,50									
Statements	Mean			Standard Deviation			Mann-Whitney (p value)		
	R1	R2	Variation	R1	R2	Variation	R1	R2	Result
Q8.1-Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment.	4,49	4,53	0,9%	0,644	0,625	-2,9%	0,226	0,242	Non Significant differences
Q8.2-Flexibility, agility, and the willingness to experiment (combined with the willingness to make mistakes) are the components of the new Branding mindset.	4,37	4,47	2,2%	0,824	0,698	15,0%	0,221	0,010	Significant differences in R2
METAPRINCIPLE OPEN – Mean R1: 4,42 Mean R2: 4,42									
Statements	Mean			Standard Deviation			Mann-Whitney (p value)		
	R1	R2	Variation	R1	R2	Variation	R1	R2	Result
Q.6.2-A brand gains relevance by working to generate value for its ecosystem.	4,47	4,64	3,9%	0,644	0,549	-14,7%	0,472	0,567	Non Significant differences
Q.6.4-To understand its consumer in-depth, the brand must establish direct forms of dialogue with its target and not rely only on	4,49	4,40	- 2,0%	0,612	0,705	15,0%	0,650	0,488	Non Significant differences

research carried out by third parties.									
Q.6.1-Relevant brands generate value through the evaluation of their consumers and stakeholders, who determine what the brand represents.	4,35	4,33	-0,5%	0,744	0,798	7,3%	0,948	0,958	Non Significant differences
Q.6.3-Co-creation increasingly contributes to a faster and more efficient generation of product or service launches and improvements.	4,37	4,29	-1,9%	0,692	0,695	0,5%	0,342	0,060	Non Significant differences

Table 4.2 presents the trends that were rated significantly different ($p < 0,05$). In all these cases Brazilians gave greater relevance in their evaluation, when compared with the Portuguese members of Delphi panel, in both rounds.

Table 4.2 – Mann-Whitney Test

Statements	Mean - Brazilian		Mean - Portuguese	
	R1	R2	R1	R2
Q12.3-A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees.	4,90	4,90	4,45	4,40
Q12.1-The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world.			4,83	4,33
Q12.2-The more relevant and noticeable its purpose, the more value the brand will have.	4,80	4,80	4,40	4,13
Q10.3-Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.	4,80	4,40	4,70	4,13
Q10.2-Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to ethical guidelines is becoming more and more important.			4,40	3,93

Q8.2-Flexibility, agility, and the willingness to experiment (combined with the willingness to make mistakes) are the components of the new Branding mindset.			4,67	4,07
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To better understand how companies are internalizing these movements considered relevant in the current context, the questionnaire also asked the participants to point out trends already practiced in their company. Using the same methodology applied by Yeoh (2019) and defended by Dajani *et al.* (1979), this part of the study considered the frequency variant to determine the trends which are already being implemented in the current scenario. Trends that reached the percentage of 51% are considered those pointed out by the majority of respondents, thus reaching the stability criterion (Table 4.3).

Regarding Metaprinciple Authentic 77% (round 2) of the panelists claimed that their companies are guided by their purpose, always maintaining coherence in way of relating to employees, consumers and environment. Also 77% (round 2) of the panelists stated that their companies have a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers.

In Metaprinciple Digital 80% (round 2) of the respondents affirmed that they their companies offer several channels (online and offline) through which consumers and partners can contact them. Lastly it was stated that they are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis. This trend was considered from round 2, where 53% of the respondents marked it.

In Metaprinciple Agile, 80% (round 2) of the panelists claimed that marketing in their companies is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary. 57% (round 2) of them believe that their companies encourage employee participation and proactivity and claimed they feel stimulated to think and act creatively, not being afraid of making mistakes.

In Metaprinciple Open, panelists stated that their companies are already developing projects that generate value for their ecosystem (86% in round 2). Also, they claim that

their companies are focusing on direct contact with customers, as they are already developing channels of direct contact with their clients and regularly collect and analyze inputs regarding brand and marketing insights (71% in round 2).

Table 4.3 - Trends as Practice

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC	%	
	R1	R2
Q13.1 - My company is guided by its purpose, always maintaining its coherence in the way of relating to its employees, consumers and the environment.	68	77
Q13.2 - My company has a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers.	74	77
METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL	%	
	R1	R2
Q11.2 - We offer several channels (online and offline) through which our consumers and partners can contact our company.	82	80
Q.11.4 - We are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis.	45	53
METAPRINCIPLE AGILE	%	
	R1	R2
Q9.1 - Our Marketing is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally and is always attentive, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary.	82	80
Q9.2 - My company encourages employee participation and proactivity. We feel stimulated to think and act creatively, we are not afraid of making mistakes.	60	57
METAPRINCIPLE OPEN	%	
	R1	R2
Q7.3 - My company has already developed (or is developing) projects that generate true value for its ecosystem (the community where it is inserted, suppliers, customers, among others).	76	86
Q7.2 - My company has already developed (or is developing) channels of direct contact with the consumer and uses these channels regularly to collect and analyze inputs regarding our products / services and launches.	60	71

4.1.2 Results: Prominent trends for the post-covid scenario

For this part of the study, an open-ended question was presented to stimulate respondents brainstorming in the first round, allowing the expert panelists to offer additional items not considered in the extant literature (Yeoh, 2019). Data collected from this question were analyzed through Thematic Content Analysis which is one of the most common analysis

methods in qualitative research with an emphasis on identifying patterns (or ‘themes’) within a set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Framework of Brand Manifesto (Baumgarth *et al.* 2020) was applied to structure data analysis. As exposed on chapter 2, this framework is a result from discussions that took place in panels of experts consisting of marketing and branding practitioners led by marketing academics. Four main dimensions could be identified in which brand management is likely to change in the future: Metaprinciple Open; Metaprinciple Agile; Metaprinciple Digital; Metaprinciple Authentic. Categories that gathered main trends base each dimension of the framework as presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 – Brand Work Manifesto

DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE OPEN	
Category Highlights	Statements
Brand participation over Brand Ownership	Authoritarian, arrogant determining brands are no longer accepted. Brands now generate their value through the appreciation of their customers and stakeholders.
Network over the Company	Relevant brands are concerned about establishing and solidifying its network. They are crucial in determining brands success stimulating co-creation contributing to a faster and more efficient generation of products and services or an improved exposure.
Customer Contact over External Studies	The brand owner has to understand their target audience and their culture and to do so it’s important a direct dialogue with its audience.
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE AGILE	
Category Highlights	Statements
Adaptation over Rigid Rules	A brand has to develop in order to stay relevant. Brand management creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand.
Experimentation over Protection	Rigid processes have to be abolished and brand management is required to act according to agile principles and banish rigid rules.
Empowerment over Top Down	Brands are allowed to make mistakes and so are employees. Letting go, trusting, permitting and training are more important activities in brand management than directing, controlling, regulating and sanctioning.
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL	
Category Highlights	Statements
Data over Intuition	Brand managers of tomorrow must be able to collect, process, interpret, apply and critically reflect the available information. This includes the ability to assess and handle more innovative approaches to data collection and data manipulation.
Ranking over Recall	Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies, but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to ethical guidelines.
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC	
Category Highlights	Statements
Ethics over Profit Maximization	Brands make profit and with that comes the responsibility of conducting themselves ethically and morally within the market. A brand must work for your business and bring value to the world, that is, must have brand purpose.

Authenticity over Market-oriented Positions	Following the latest trends and focusing on sales growth are not the most important factors. What is more important, are that the brand's values and communications are credible and honest.
Exclusive Touchpoints over Standard Channels	Brands need to offer personal and exclusive experiences both online and offline.

Source: Baumgarth *et al.* (2020)

The data analysis adopted deductive and inductive procedure, and it can be described as follows: First all statements were exported to Excel 2201. Then key words and sentences were identified to code the data. In the second phase, codes were grouped following the categories and dimensions of Brand Work Manifesto framework (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Grouping was analyzed and validated by two marketing and branding experts. Finally, deductive method was adopted to capture trends in the Brand Work Manifesto perceived as most relevant in the post-pandemic period and inductive method was used to identify any new branding trends to consolidate in the post-pandemic period that hadn't been covered in the framework. A final list of eleven macro trends were submitted later in the second round of the panel for experts to choose a maximum of five trends that they considered the most likely to consolidate in post-covid scenario (see table 4.5).

Metaprinciple Open

Panelists mentioned spontaneously in a relevant way the category “Brand Participation over Brand Ownership”. For them is important brand managers to be aware of the meaningful and genuine brand participation in the ecosystem to experience positive performance-related outcomes (Freeman *et al.*, 2018). The other categories of this dimensions weren't spontaneously mentioned as relevant trends to consolidate in the post-pandemic scenario.

Metaprinciple Agile

Flexibility and agility are components of the new branding mindset that will become even more relevant in the future. Brand management creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand. Thus, rigid processes must be abolished, and brand management is required to act according to agile principles (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). That was the only category highlighted spontaneously by the respondents.

Metaprinciple Digital

COVID-19 was marked by several lockdowns that lead consumers turned even more to devices with internet connection to maintain their routines. Using new technologies, consumers have created new work habits, study, leisure, shopping and socialization (Westbrook & Angus, 2020). Therefore, this dimension presented so many new trend categories mentioned spontaneously. Although, “Data over Intuition” and “Ranking over Recall” weren’t spontaneously mentioned.

Remote work brings a trend of hybrid work consolidation, and this is causing a big impact on work routines and consumer behavior. Brand experiences will become more frequently complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2020). Online shopping is a habit that will become increasingly present in consumers' lives from now on. Due to this current context becoming more and more digital brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers (Troisi *et al.*, 2020), management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels.

Metaprinciple Authentic

This dimension was the most spontaneously mentioned as a relevant and prominent to consolidate in the post-covid reality. Not only all its categories were mentioned but also new ones were brought up by the panelists. Pooj Morjaria, founder of the platform “Did They Help?” describes the new mindset of the post-pandemic reality as follows:

“People want more accountability. There is a renewed sense of purpose. We have all had time to sit and take stock of what truly matters to us. By the end of 2021, brand accountability will be as important to sales as marketing.” (Chiu & Safian-Demers, 2021: 212)

In this context, the expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society will become even more relevant. A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world. To be relevant it must be guided by its purpose: engaging employees, customers and partners. And maintain consistency in its actions, in addition to positioning itself. Companies must act and show exactly what they

do and how they do it: consumers are demanding transparency above all. Brand transparency is all about being open and honest when it comes to your products, your pricing, your values, and how you do business overall (Donlan, 2021).

Lasting relationships with today’s customers are contingent on your brand’s ability to deliver highly relevant, contextual, personalized experiences (Donlan, 2021). Therefore, brands must consider provide special memories and experiences above products/services. People have now a new understanding of themselves and their place in the world in the quest for a fuller, more balanced and better life (Westbrook & Angus, 2021). Health (physical and mental) will become even more a top priority to consumers and to companies.

Table 4.5 – Framework emerging from Thematic Content Analysis

DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE OPEN	
Category Highlights	Statements
1- Brand Participation over Brand Ownership	Relevant brands work to create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation. Companies are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment. The more they considerate stakeholders' needs and demands more they'll experience positive performance-related outcomes.
Network over the Company	No spontaneous mention
Customer Contact over External Studies	No spontaneous mention
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE AGILE	
Category Highlights	Statements
Adaptation over Rigid Rules	No spontaneous mention
2- Experimentation over Protection	Flexibility, agility, are the components of the new Branding mindset.
Empowerment over Top Down	No spontaneous mention
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL	
Category Highlights	Statements
Data over Intuition	No spontaneous mention
Ranking over Recall	No spontaneous mention
3- Phygital over Standart Channels (New)	Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.
4- Remote Working over Traditional Working (New)	Remote work brings a trend of hybrid work consolidation and this is causing a big impact on work routines and consumer behavior.
5- E-commerce Era (New)	Online shopping is a habit that will become increasingly present in consumers' lives. E-commerce will gain even more relevance within this context.
6- Digital Enviroment over Traditional Behavior (New)	Brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels.

DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC	
Category Highlights	Statements
7- Ethics over Profit Maximization	The expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society have increased. Seize the opportunity to rebuild better. Businesses must collaborate to create a more sustainable world, promoting the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy, contributing to a more sustainable world (helping to solve social inequality and environmental issues).
8- Authenticity over Market-oriented Positions	A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world. To be relevant it must be guided by its purpose: engaging employees, customers and partners. And maintain consistency in its actions, in addition to positioning itself.
9- Transparency above all (New)	Consumers will no longer forgive lack of transparency. Companies must act and show exactly what they do and how they do it
10- Memorable Experiences above Transactions (New)	Brands must consider provide special memories and experiences above products/services.
11- Health Protagonism (New)	Health (physical and mental) will become even more a top priority to consumers and to companies.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on literature review (deductive method) and own elaboration based on data collected (inductive method)

At the end of the second round, using the same study methodology applied by Yeoh (2019) and Dajani *et al.* (1979), the study considered only trends with a frequency from 51% as presented in table 4.6.

The main branding trends considered to consolidate in the post-covid scenario by marketing experts belong to Metaprinciple Authentic. 71% of the panelists selected the statement which defends that “brands must have a relevant purpose and must be guided by it, engaging employees, customers and partners. And maintain consistency in its actions, in addition to positioning itself.” 68% of the experts believe that the expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society will continue to increase. Businesses must collaborate to create a more sustainable world, promoting the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy, contributing to a more sustainable world.

Metaprinciple Open performed the third brand management trend that panelists believe to consolidate in the next few years. 54% pointed the following statement: “Relevant brands work to create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation. Companies are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment. The more they considerate stakeholders' needs and demands more they'll experience positive performance-related outcomes.”

Metaprinciple Digital performed de last two branding trends believed to consolidate in the post-covid market. 51% of the panelists believe that professionals must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels. Also 51% of the respondents are aware of complexity and relevance increase of brand experiences in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.

Table 4.6 – Ranking of the Prominent Trends

DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC		
Category Highlights	Trend (Statement)	%
Authenticity over Market-oriented Positions	A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world. To be relevant it must be guided by its purpose: engaging employees, customers and partners. And maintain consistency in its actions, in addition to positioning itself.	71
Ethics over Profit Maximization	The expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society have increased. Seize the opportunity to rebuild better. Businesses must collaborate to create a more sustainable world, promoting the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy, contributing to a more sustainable world (helping to solve social inequality and environmental issues).	68
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE OPEN		
Category Highlights	Trend (Statement)	%
Brand Participation over Brand Ownership	Relevant brands work to create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation. Companies are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment. The more they considerate stakeholders' needs and demands more they'll experience positive performance-related outcomes.	54
DIMENSION: METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL		
Category Highlights	Trend (Statement)	%
Digital Environment over Traditional Behavior	Brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels.	51
Phygital over Standard Channels	Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.	51

4.2 Discussion of Results

4.2.1 Discussion: Relevant branding trends in the current context

All the trends identified in the literature review and presented to the panelists were considered relevant, performing a mean of the Likert scale above 4. In this way, it was able to identify a strong harmony of thought between academics namely, Aaker, 2015; Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020; Freeman *et al.*, 2018; He and Harris, 2021; Westbrook and Angus, 2021; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2020 and professionals of marketing with specific brand management tasks and responsibilities.

In line with Baumgarth *et al.* (2020), the more relevant trends belong to the Metaprinciple Authentic. The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. Brands must have purpose, that is, they must have a reason to exist to improve the world. Respondents strongly believe that a well-founded purpose reflects and supports the business strategy, creates differentials about the competition, finds an echo within customers, energizes and inspires employees (Aaker, 2015).

More than 75% of the respondents outlined that their company has a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers, maintaining its coherence in the way of relating to its employees, consumers and the environment. This corroborates with some author studies (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020; He & Harris, 2020; Yohn, 2020) which argue that successful brand management is characterized by the fact that a brand's behavior and communication correspond to its purpose. Not only this Metaprinciple was considered the most relevant but also its guidelines are already being put into practice by the market.

Metaprinciple Digital is the second most relevant for the panelists. Brand Managers of the future must understand how the data is collected, processed, and interpreted (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). More than 50% of the respondents stated that “We are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis”. Professionals are alert to brand experiences that are becoming even more complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect, as exposed by Swaminathan *et al.*, (2020) and highlighted by Westbrook

and Angus (2021) with the term Phygital Reality. “Traditional companies are adopting Phygital Reality technologies (physical + digital) to access the brand via multiple channels seamlessly connect, improving human interactions and enhancing experiences” (Westbrook & Angus, 2021: 17). 80% of the respondents admit that their companies already offer several channels (online and offline) through which their consumers and partners can make contact.

Metaprinciple Agile occupies the second place in relevance together with Metaprinciple Digital. For the panelists, “Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment”. This finding is endorsed by Baumgarth *et al.* (2020). 80% of the panelists declared that “Our Marketing is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally and is always attentive, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary”. Therefore, the study concludes that agility and flexibility, already part in past studies (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020; Kotler *et al.*, 2017; Fox *et al.*, 2020) are already consolidated in the marketplace.

The third most relevant Metaprinciple evaluated by the participants was Open. The most relevant trend evaluated in this dimension: “A brand gains relevance by working to generate value for its ecosystem” is linked to the shared-value proposition presented by Westbrook and Angus (2021) which defends the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy. Companies are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment. The more they considerate stakeholders' needs and demands more they will experience positive performance-related outcomes (Freeman *et al.*, 2018). This issue is becoming so relevant that more than 85% of the respondents claimed that their companies have already developed (or are developing) projects that generate true value for their ecosystem.

4.2.2 Discussion: Prominent trends for the post-covid scenario

Through the results of this study, it can be observed that having a relevant, inspiring, and coherent purpose and acting by generating true value for the ecosystem are the most important branding guidelines for the market, following Metaprinciple Digital.

Previous research pointed out that Metaprinciple Authentic, which highlights the importance of brand purpose, was considered the most relevant dimension of the Brand Work Manifesto. The statement that mentions that relevant brands are working to generate true value for their ecosystem was rated as the most important trend in the current context. Also, the study reinforces this scenario when it points out the two most likely trends to consolidate in the post-covid context: Brand Purpose (71%) and Brand Value (69%).

Respondents rated Metaprinciple Digital as the second most relevant dimension of the Brand Work Manifesto and pointed out Digital Environment (51%) and Multichannel Brand Experience (51%) trends as likely to consolidate in the post-Covid scenario.

Digital Environment was a new trend identified through inductive method and pointed out by respondents as a relevant trend that should consolidate in the post-covid scenario. With the lockdowns that marked the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers turned to devices with internet connection to maintain their routines. Using new technologies, consumers have created new work habits, study, leisure, shopping and socialization (Westbrook & Angus, 2020). Recently the deepening into the Digital Environment has become even more relevant for marketing professionals. Brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels and data organization (Troisi *et al.*, 2020).

Trends linked to brand purpose, digital environment, and meaningful brand participation have accelerated within the new pandemic scenario and have become even more relevant. These were highlighted by specialist professionals as the trends that will consolidate in the new post-covid reality.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Main findings of the study

Based on Brand Work Manifesto (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020) this investigation aims (1) to explore how the context of COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the emergence or strengthening of new trends in brand management and (2) to identify the trends that should consolidate and lead brand managers in the post covid scenario. Following this, related specific objectives arise: (1.1) to identify the relevant branding trends in the current context; (1.2) to identify which of these trends are already being put into practice (2.1) to capture trends in the Brand Work Manifesto perceived as most relevant in the post-pandemic period (deductive method); and (2.2) to identify any new branding trends to consolidate in the post-pandemic period (inductive method).

The study presented other authors' point of view that allows a broader vision about how the new context is influencing the emergence and strengthening of new branding trends. The literature also discussed how COVID-19 is accelerating these trends and exposed some cases of brands implementing their strategies based on the Brand Work Manifesto guidelines. Regarding the state of the art on the topic and addressing the objectives of the study, a qualitative and exploratory approach was applied through Delphi Method. A survey within a panel of 45 experts composed by professionals in marketing and brand management in Portugal and Brazil was carried out.

Regarding specific objective 1.1 findings support that all the trends identified in the literature review and presented to the panelists were considered relevant being the Metaprinciple Authentic the most important dimension as rated by the panelists. COVID-19 increased the expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society. Brands make profit and with that comes the responsibility of conducting themselves ethically and morally within the market (Westbrook & Angus, 2021). A brand must work for its business and bring value to the world (Fracheta, 2017). Metaprinciple Digital, the second most relevant dimension, states that along with the increased relevance of multi-channel management pushed by the pandemic context data collection and analysis expertise are critical. Therefore, Brand Managers of the future must understand how data is collected, processed, and interpreted (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). Mepatrinciple

Agile draws the panelists attention since it approaches the flexibility and agility to a brand keep itself relevant (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020). In the current scenario agility and flexibility are even more important as it has been witnessing firms creating more flexible and resilient business models demanded in the pandemic reality. The fourth relevant dimension, Metaprinciple Open, highlights that brand must work to generate value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation, enhancing reputation that leads to competitive advantages in the marketplace and superior financial outcomes (Jones, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2018).

Addressing specific objective 1.2, the study points out that all Metaprinciples have trends that are already been implemented by companies of panelists in some way. They recognize that their companies have clear and engaging purpose (Metaprinciple Authentic). Also recognize that the Marketing management in their companies is agile, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary (Metaprinciple Agile). Panelists also assumed that their companies already work with several channels – online and offline – through which consumers and stakeholders can make contact. And they are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection (Metaprinciple Digital). Finally, panelists stated that their companies are already developing projects that generate value for its ecosystem (Metaprinciple Open).

Regarding specific objective 2.1, research presents branding trends of Brand Work Manifesto linked to brand purpose (having an authentic and engaging purpose and maintain consistency with it; work collaborating to a more sustainable world); shared value (create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation); and multichannel experiences (increasingly more complex and relevant) as the prominent ones to consolidate in the post-pandemic scenario.

Addressing specific objective 2.2, research capture a trend that approaches the importance of delving into the digital environment (deepen in digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels) as a new branding trend to consolidate even more in new future.

5.2 Theoretical implications

Throughout history pandemics, from the black plague in the Middle Ages to the Spanish flu in the early 20th century, have brought about huge social changes (Reeves *et al.*, 2020) and it is certain that COVID-19 will do the same. All these new challenges faced by marketers and highlighted by the pandemic are drawing attention of some analysts that are calling for a fundamental rethinking of marketing and branding models (Boudet *et al.* 2020). Besides addressing the Brand Work Manifesto relevant trends under the pandemic pressure, this study makes a relevant contribution to the literature in presenting the branding guidelines that should lead brand management from now answering to Baumgarth *et al.*'s (2020) as “hot topics” in the post-covid world to be deepened by academics.

5.3 Managerial implications

This study adds to marketing professionals by contributing to understanding how COVID-19 environment is shaping new paths of brand management and by calling their attention to the relevant branding trends that should consolidate and lead the market in the post pandemic world.

In the investigation it is noted that brands which aim to maintain their relevance in this new scenario must direct their attention to the four Metaprinciples that should lead brand management:

Metaprinciple Open: to be relevant brands must work to create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

Metaprinciple Agile: rigid processes must be abolished, and brand management is required to act according to agile and flexible principles banishing rigid rules (Baumgarth *et al.*, 2020).

Metaprinciple Digital: attention to brand experiences that are becoming even more important and complex in an environment in which consumers and stakeholders can access the brand via multiple channels (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2020). Because of the

pandemic context consumers turned even more to digital device. Brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers (Troisi *et al.*, 2020), management of relevant and engaging content and traffic strategies.

Metaprinciple Authentic: relevant brands must seize the opportunity to rebuild better. The expectation that brands act with a purpose to bring value to the world has increased market (Westbrook & Angus, 2021). Not only they must have a purpose, but most importantly, they have to act coherently with it in all instances. This is more important than ever in periods marked by dramatic external changes (Baumgarth, *et al.* 2020).

The configuration of this new scenario brought by the study can help marketing professionals to be alert and prepared for the post covid world that is emerging. This material is of great value in guiding brand managers to think about their business structures, an ideal profile for the branding team, among other strategic aspects that must address the new branding guidelines.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This investigation was designed considering exclusively practitioners (marketing and branding professionals) that agree to be part of an international Delphi panel. Marketing and branding practitioners spend their time largely focused on their industry, their brand, and on learning from their own direct experiences and the situations they have witnessed. This perspective provides them the unparalleled depth of wisdom specific to their own, if comparatively narrow, areas of direct involvement (Flostrand *et al.*, 2020). Future research should include academics since their expertise include the patterns and theoretical models that can lead to the consolidation of trends (Murphy *et al.*, 2012). Insights from both will ensure broader and richer branding trend projections.

The study presents a framework containing four dimensions that encompass several trends considered relevant for the current moment and the coming years. There is an opportunity to delve deeper into the subject, choosing a metaprinciple or one trend of the framework. Finally, relevant branding trends that should consolidate in the post-covid scenario were identified. Future research should empirically test the branding relevant

trends in the post-covid context across different nationalities and sectors of activity.
Quantitative studies can contribute to more robust and generalized results.

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7. APPENDIX

Appendix 1. E-mail sent to panelists (Round 1)

We are writing about the following questionnaire that is part of a Marketing Management Master's study. It aims to collect the perception of marketing/branding professionals about the trends that should influence branding strategies in the post-pandemic world. A Delphi panel with experts will be carried out to get a consensus and project the main trends. Therefore, we would like to kindly invite you to answer this questionnaire that should last around 15 minutes. This material is in English as this project is following a study initiated at an international level.

This study should comprise two rounds so that we can reach a group consensus. Therefore, we kindly request that you: 1 - be available to answer the other possible rounds and 2 - Return us by June 15th, so we can start tabulation and analysis of the first round.

Appendix 2. Questionnaire (Round 1)

EMERGING TRENDS ON BRANDING IN THE POS-COVID WORLD

The following questionnaire aims to collect the perception of marketing professionals in relation to the trends that should influence branding actions in the post-pandemic world: to understand which are the most important and which should be consolidated in the next years.

The authors of the questionnaire assure absolute confidentiality to the respondent. Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

PROFILE OF THE COMPANY

1 – What is the sector in which your company operates? _____

2 – Your corporate brand is:

() National () Multinational

3 – The number of employees in your company

- () Less than 500
- () Between 501 and 1.500
- () Between 1.501 and 2.500
- () More than 2.500

EMBRACING NEW TRENDS

How would you evaluate the following statement about the new trends of brand management, according to its importance?

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

	1	2	3	4	5
4) It is relevant that Marketing/Brand professionals be open to embracing new trends, even if this means changing values and redefining strategies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.1) Please justify your answer					
5) Brand positioning requires more responsibility nowadays.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.1) Please justify your answer					

METAPRINCIPLE OPEN

This dimension addresses the new ways for the brand to generate value through an open and deeper relationship with its stakeholders and consumers.

6 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE OPEN

	1	2	3	4	5
a) Relevant brands generate value through the evaluation of their consumers and stakeholders, who determine what the brand represents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) A brand gains relevance by working to generate value for its ecosystem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Co-creation increasingly contributes to a faster and more efficient generation of product or service launches and improvements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) To understand its consumer in-depth, the brand must establish direct forms of dialogue with its target and not rely only on research carried out by third parties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7 – Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work

My company has already developed (or is developing) projects that generate true value for its ecosystem (the community where it is inserted, suppliers, customers, among others).

My company has already developed (or is developing) a product / service or project in co-creation with consumers, customers, partners or competitors.

My company has already developed (or is developing) channels of direct contact with the consumer and uses these channels regularly to collect and analyze inputs regarding our products / services and launches.

METAPRINCIPLE AGILE

This dimension addresses the growing importance of agile and flexible brand management

8 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE AGILE

	1	2	3	4	5
e) Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Flexibility, agility, and the willingness to experiment (combined with the willingness to make mistakes) are the components of the new Branding mindset.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Brands can make mistakes, so can their employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9 - Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work.

() My company encourages employee participation and proactivity. We feel stimulated to think and act creatively, we are not afraid of making mistakes.

() Our Marketing is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally and is always attentive, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary.

METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL

This dimension addresses how the digital revolution is transforming brand management

10 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL

	1	2	3	4	5
h) Brand Managers of the future must understand how the data is collected, processed and interpreted, through a critical analysis and knowledge of the latest techniques of approach and collection of this data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to ethical guidelines is becoming more and more important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11- Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work.

() We are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis.

() My company developed and shared with all employees directly involved, the ethical guidelines for data collection and analysis.

() We offer several channels (online and offline) through which our consumers and partners can contact our company.

() There is an area or person responsible for managing the integration of all brand communication channels, ensuring positive brand experiences.

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC

This dimension addresses the growing importance of the role of the brand purpose to generate true value.

12 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC					
	1	2	3	4	5
k) The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l) The more relevant and noticeable its purpose, the more value the brand will have.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m) A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13 – Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work

() My company is guided by its purpose, always maintaining its coherence in the way of relating to its employees, consumers and the environment.

() My company has a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers.

THE MAIN TRENDS THAT WILL CONSOLIDATE IN THE POS-PANDEMIC WORLD

As soon as we overcome this pandemic, we will emerge in a different world compared to the one before COVID-19. This session aims to project the trends that should be consolidated in the pos-pandemic world.

14 - Finally, please write the four trends in branding that you believe will be consolidated in the post pandemic world.

- 1 - _____
- 2 - _____
- 3 - _____
- 4 - _____

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

8 – Gender:

Female Male Other

9 – Age:

Between 20 and 30

Between 30 and 40

Between 40 and 50

Between 50 and 60

More than 60

10 – City and country in which you live in: _____

11 – Your job title: _____

12 – Your e-mail: _____

Please, we need this information to control the sending of questionnaire rounds, as the Delphi methodology requires in order to arrive at a well-based consensus. We remind you that the authors of the questionnaire assure absolute confidentiality to the respondent

Appendix 3. E-mail sent to panelists (Round 2)

Continuing the Delphi panel started in July 2020 for the Master's in Marketing Management, we are now sending out a new questionnaire for the second round of this study, which aims to point out trends that should influence branding strategies in the post-pandemic world.

For this step, we are sending you the overall result of the first-round answers, along with your individual response. The objective is to allow you to analyze the group's result and be able to re-evaluate or reinforce your own answers. In this way, we'll be able to explore the variables' evolution to conclude the group's consensus. Therefore, we kindly request that you answer this questionnaire that should last no more than 10 minutes.

Please: 1 - Be available to eventually answer another last round. 2 - Return us by October 18th, so we can start tabulation and analysis of the second round.

Appendix 4. Questionnaire (Round 2)

EMERGING TRENDS ON BRANDING IN THE POS-COVID WORLD

The following questionnaire corresponds to the second round of the Master's study that aims to collect the perception of marketing professionals about the most relevant trends in the present and the trends that should influence branding actions in the post-pandemic world.

The authors of the questionnaire assure absolute confidentiality to the respondent.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

METAPRINCIPLE OPEN

This dimension addresses the new ways for the brand to generate value through an open and deeper relationship with its stakeholders and consumers.

1 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE OPEN					
	1	2	3	4	5
a) Relevant brands generate value through the evaluation of their consumers and stakeholders, who determine what the brand represents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) A brand gains relevance by working to generate value for its ecosystem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Co-creation increasingly contributes to a faster and more efficient generation of product or service launches and improvements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) To understand its consumer in-depth, the brand must establish direct forms of dialogue with its target and not rely only on research carried out by third parties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2 – Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work

() My company has already developed (or is developing) projects that generate true value for its ecosystem (the community where it is inserted, suppliers, customers, among others).

() My company has already developed (or is developing) a product / service or project in co-creation with consumers, customers, partners or competitors.

() My company has already developed (or is developing) channels of direct contact with the consumer and uses these channels regularly to collect and analyze inputs regarding our products / services and launches.

METAPRINCIPLE AGILE

This dimension addresses the growing importance of agile and flexible brand management

3 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE AGILE					
	1	2	3	4	5
e) Branding creates the basis for the evolutionary and dynamic progression of a brand, so it must constantly deal with changes in the internal and external environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Flexibility, agility, and the willingness to experiment (combined with the willingness to make mistakes) are the components of the new Branding mindset.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Brands can make mistakes, so can their employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4 - Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work.

() My company encourages employee participation and proactivity. We feel stimulated to think and act creatively, we are not afraid of making mistakes.

() Our Marketing is aware of the constant changes that occur internally and externally and is always attentive, adjusting the company's strategic guidelines when necessary.

METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL

This dimension addresses how the digital revolution is transforming brand management

5 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE DIGITAL					
	1	2	3	4	5
h) Brand Managers of the future must understand how the data is collected, processed and interpreted, through a critical analysis and knowledge of the latest techniques of approach and collection of this data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

j) Brands must not only be aware of the new technologies but also develop a deeper understanding of rankings and the algorithms behind them. Attention to ethical guidelines is becoming more and more important.	○	○	○	○	○
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6- Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work.

() We are monitoring and investing in innovative ways of data collection, which has resulted in improvements in data processing and analysis.

() My company developed and shared with all employees directly involved, the ethical guidelines for data collection and analysis.

() We offer several channels (online and offline) through which our consumers and partners can contact our company.

() There is an area or person responsible for managing the integration of all brand communication channels, ensuring positive brand experiences.

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC

This dimension addresses the growing importance of the role of the brand purpose to generate true value.

7 - Please evaluate the statements about the new trends of brand management according to their importance.

Kindly mark only one option per row, considering: 1-Not important at all / 5-Extremely important

METAPRINCIPLE AUTHENTIC					
	1	2	3	4	5
k) The role of a brand has been expanding and today it is understood that it goes far beyond maximizing profits. A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world.	○	○	○	○	○
l) The more relevant and noticeable its purpose, the more value the brand will have.	○	○	○	○	○
m) A solid brand is guided by its purpose which drives brand strategies, makes the brand relevant to consumers and inspires its employees.	○	○	○	○	○

8 – Please mark with an x the trends that are already being adopted by the company where you work

() My company is guided by its purpose, always maintaining its coherence in the way of relating to its employees, consumers and the environment.

() My company has a clear purpose, which engages employees and inspires consumers.

THE MAIN TRENDS THAT WILL CONSOLIDATE IN THE POS-PANDEMIC WORLD

As soon as we overcome this pandemic, we will emerge in a different world compared to the one before COVID-19. This session aims to project the trends that should be consolidated in the pos-pandemic world.

9 - Here we present the trends most cited as being relevant to the post covid context by the participants of this study . Please choose a maximum of five of these trends, that you consider are the most likely to consolidate in the pos-pandemic world.

() **Brand Participation over Brand Ownership:** Relevant brands work to create shared value for its ecosystem through meaningful participation. Companies are affected by and affect many individuals and groups, including suppliers, customers, employees, communities and the natural environment. The more they considerate stakeholders' needs and demands more they'll experience positive performance-related outcomes.

() **Experimentation over Protection:** Flexibility, agility, are the components of the new Branding mindset.

() **Phygital over Standart Channels:** Brand experiences are increasingly complex in an environment where consumers and stakeholders can access the brand through multiple online and offline channels that easily connect.

() **Remote Working over Traditional Working:** Remote work brings a trend of hybrid work consolidation and this is causing a big impact on work routines and consumer behavior.

() **E-commerce Era:** Online shopping is a habit that will become increasingly present in consumers' lives. E-commerce will gain even more relevance within this context.

() **Digital Enviroment over Traditional Behavior:** Brands must turn even more to branding in the digital environment: delve into the digital behavior of consumers, management of relevant content and strategies within the various digital channels.

() **Ethics over Profit Maximization:** The expectation that companies must protect the planet and contribute to a better society have increased. Seize the opportunity to rebuild better. Businesses must collaborate to create a more sustainable world, promoting the shift from a volume-based economy to a value-based economy, contributing to a more sustainable world (helping to solve social inequality and environmental issues).

() **Authenticity over Market-oriented Positions:** A brand must have purpose, that is, it must have a reason to exist to improve the world. To be relevant it must be guided by its purpose: engaging employees, customers and partners. And maintain consistency in its actions, in addition to positioning itself.

() **Transparency above all:** Consumers will no longer forgive lack of transparency. Companies must act and show exactly what they do and how they do it

() **Memorable Experiences above Transactions:** Brands must consider provide special memories and experiences above products/services.

() **Health Protagonism:** Health (physical and mental) will become even more a top priority to consumers and to companies.