

Thesis Findings

This research is focused on the connections between actions discussed in cancel culture and people's reactions towards what they view. The study looked at individuals 18 and older who have used social media for a minimum amount of 5 years as well as hold a general knowledge of what cancel culture is.

A total of 127 participants were able to complete this survey. Of these participants 77.2% (n=98) were female, 20.5% (n=26) were male, and 2.4% (n=3) were non-binary. 50.4% (n=64) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, 12.6% (n=16) fell between the ages 26 and 32, 8.7% (n=11) were between the ages of 33 and 41, 6.3% (n=8) were between the ages of 42 and 49, then 22.05% (n=28) were over the age of 50. These results conclude that participants were of diverse generations.

This research was able to gain some background information about what the participants have experienced on social media. The top three social media sites that people used daily were Facebook with 89.76% (n=114), Instagram with 77.95% (n=99), and YouTube with 59.06% (n=77). However the platforms they most saw cancel culture being discussed on, the top three platforms were Facebook with 56.91% (n=70), Instagram with 51.22% (n=63) and Twitter with 47.97% (n=59). The acts they have seen being discussed on social media in regards to cancel culture the most on these platforms were both hate speech and sexual assault with 66.67% (n=84). The issues that all participants saw the most on social media, were Discrimination, Racism, and Political Views with 75.59% (n=96). The top three groups that people saw being discussed throughout cancel culture were musicians 56.69% (n=72), actors 75.59% (n=96), and influencers 74.02% (n=94).

In regards to the first research question, participants were first asked how often cancel culture affected the way they viewed a certain topic. They were given a likert scale with 1 being never, and 5 being always. Most people were in the middle of the likert scale with 38.58% (n=49) people choosing the neutral option. This can be shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1:



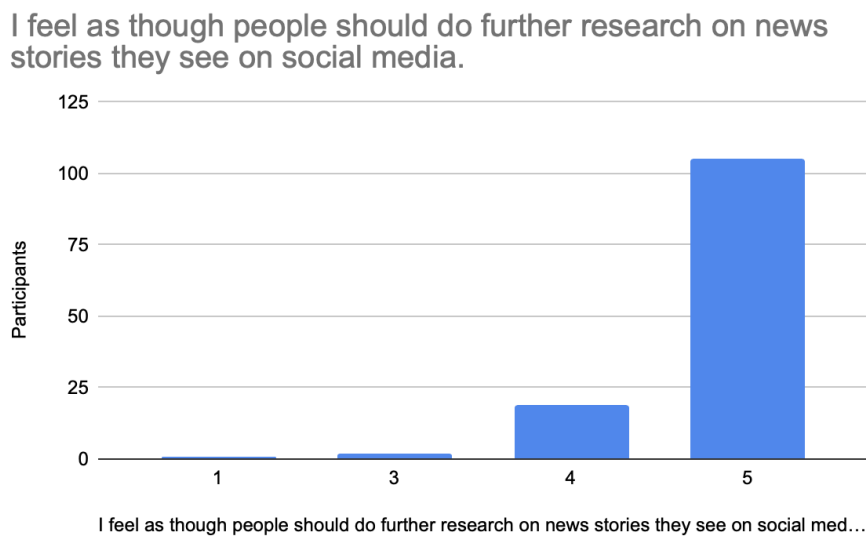
Of all the participants 66.14% (n=84) had not reacted publicly to discussions within cancel culture. However, the topics they felt most passionate about were social movements, with 75.86% (n=88) choosing the topic. When asked how people would react to the content they see, 61.42% (n=78) people responded that they would at least like the post, while 35.43% (n=45) of the participants said they usually didn't agree with the content. When cross tabbing these actions with participants ages, 3.14% (n=4) people agreed and reacted with more than a like were those between the ages of 33 and 41 as well as participants over the age of 50. This can be shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

COUNTA of Liked Content	What is your age range?					
Liked Content	18 - 25	26 - 32	33 - 41	42 - 49	Over 50	Grand Total
Disagree		20	2	4	4	15
Other				2		2
Yes		44	14	5	4	11
Grand Total	64	16	11	8	28	127

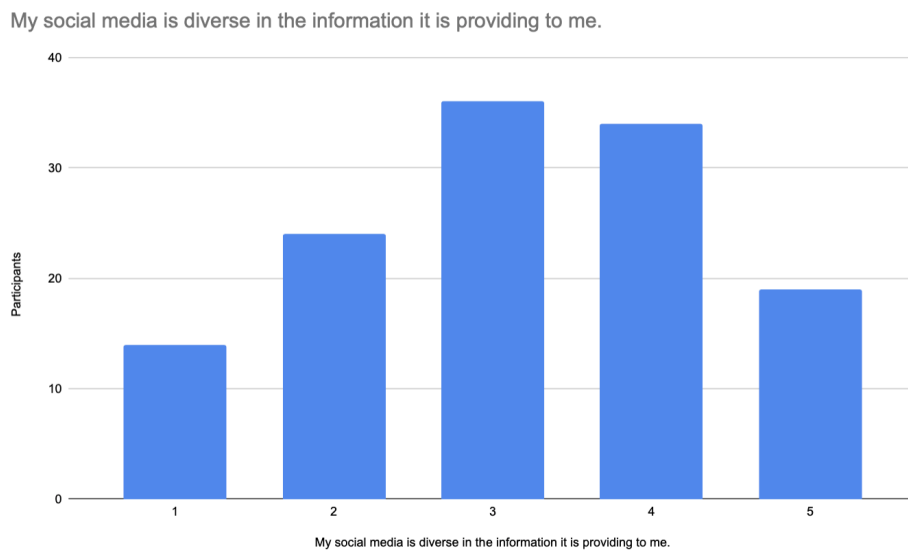
When given the statement “I feel as though people should do further research on news stories they see on social media”, 82.68% (n=105) of people strongly agreed with the statement. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. For this particular question no participants chose 2 on the scale. This can be shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3:



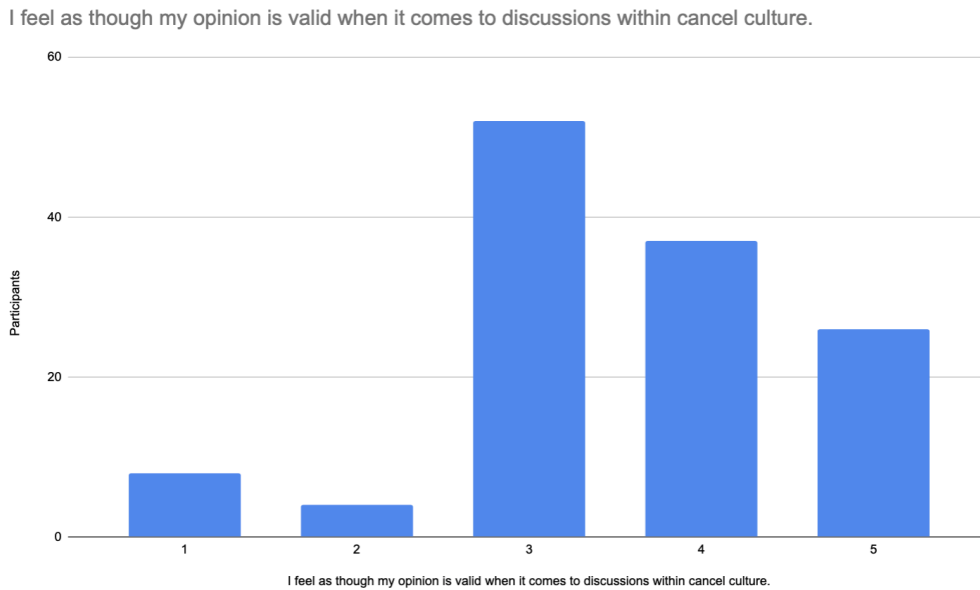
When given the statement “my social media is diverse in the information it is providing to me”, answers were all over the scale, but relatively neutral, as 28.35% (n=36) people were right in the middle. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. The results can be shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4:



A majority of participants strongly agreed when given the statement, “I feel as though my opinion is valid when it comes to discussions within cancel culture”, with 49.60% (n=63) people saying that they agree. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. This can be shown in Figure 5.

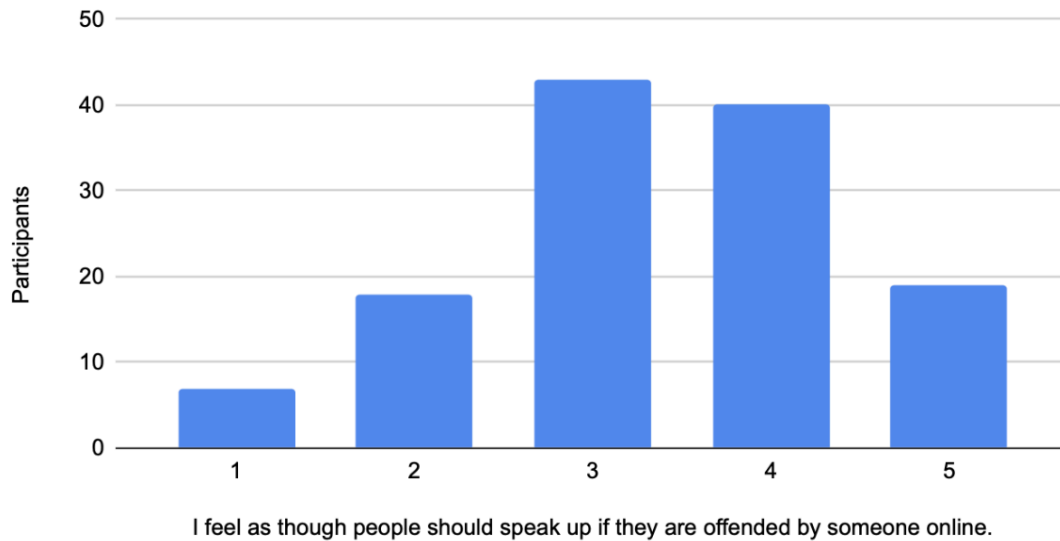
Figure 5:



Finally, another statement that people strongly agreed with was, “I feel as though people should speak up if they are offended by someone online”, with 46.46% (n=59) participants saying that they agree. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. This can be shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6:

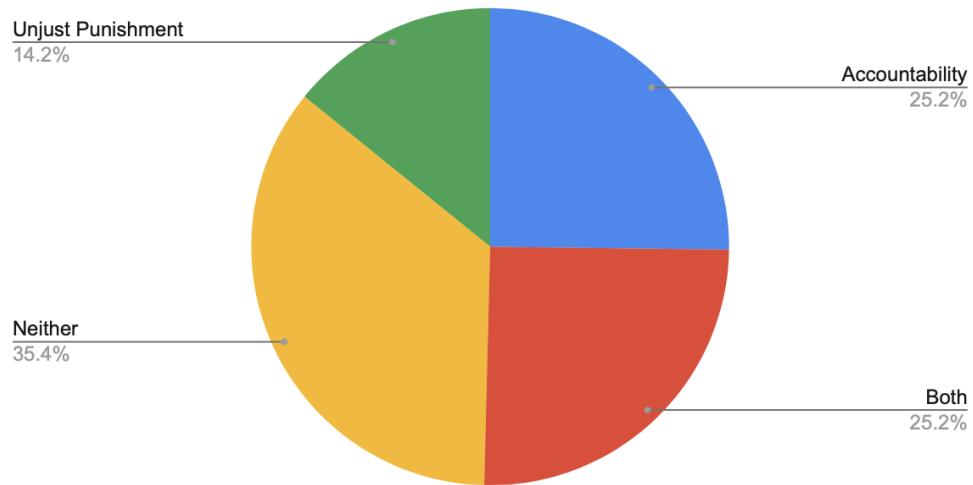
I feel as though people should speak up if they are offended by someone online.



For the second research question, participants were first given two popular social movements within cancel culture. Of the social movements provided to the participants, more people felt more affected by the events following the Black Lives Matter, with 44.09%(n=56) participants, than the Me Too Movement which only had 38.58% (n=49) of participants. When asked whether they felt calling people out on social media represented accountability or unjust punishment, 35.43% (n=45) said it represented neither, however, 25.20% (n=32) of people chose accountability and 25.20%(n=32) of people chose both. This can be shown in Figure 7.

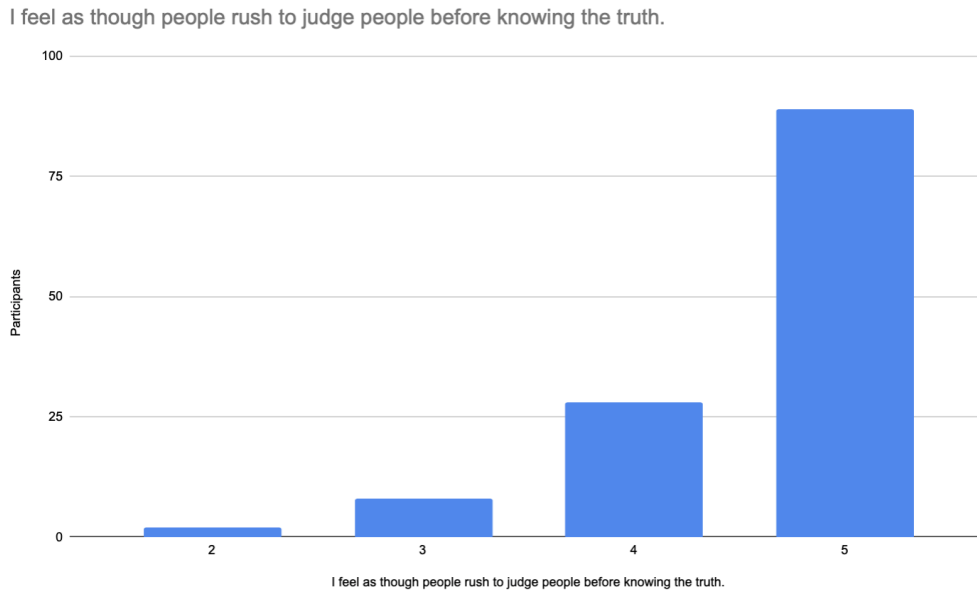
Figure 7:

Does calling people out on social media represent accountability or unjust punishment?



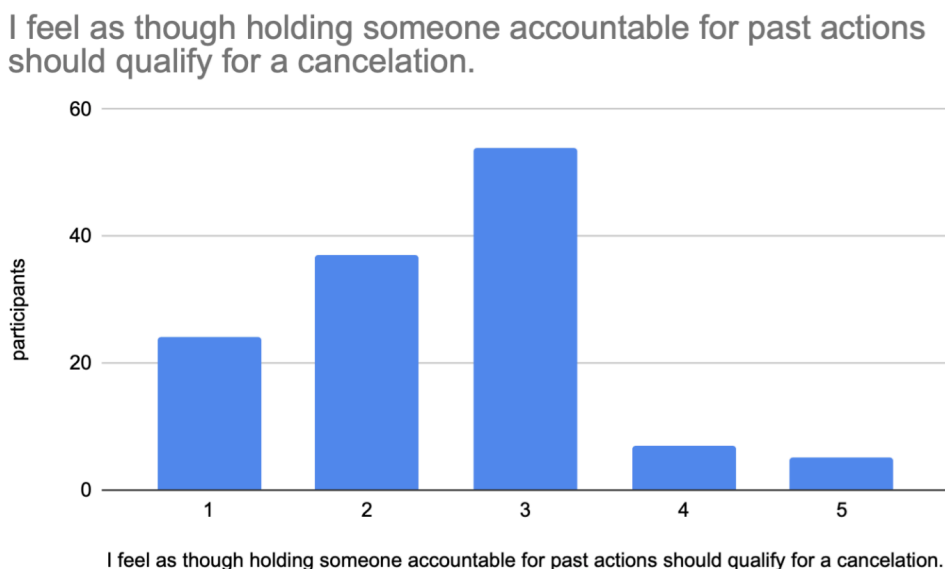
Then, when given the statement, “I feel as though people rush to judge people before knowing the truth”, the majority of participants strongly agreed with the statement with 70.08% (n=89) people, while no participants said they strongly disagreed. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. The results are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8:



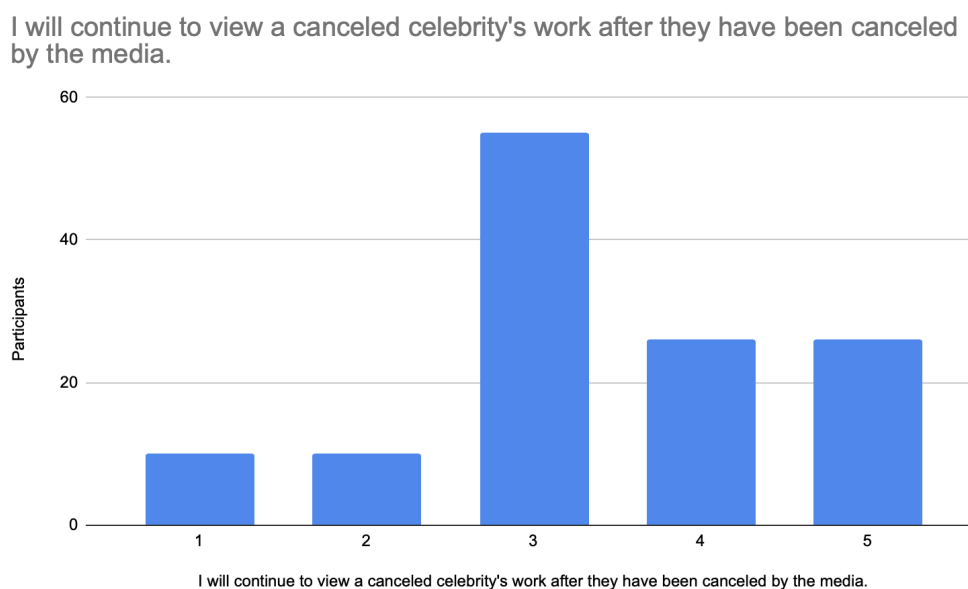
The statement, “I feel as though holding someone accountable for past actions should qualify for a cancellation”, brought a negative response as 48.3% (n=61) participants said they disagree. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. The results are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9:



Lastly, the statement “I will continue to view a canceled celebrity's work after they have been canceled by the media” provided a positive response, but most participants went neutral with 43.31% (n=55) people. This was given with a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. This can be seen in Figure 10.

Figure 10:



Discussion

Participants were first asked how often cancel culture affected the way they viewed a certain topic. Most people were in the middle of the likert scale with 38.58% (n=49) people choosing the neutral option. These results can be seen in Figure 5. Of all the participants 66.14% (n=84) had not reacted publicly to discussions within cancel culture. However, the topics they felt most passionate about were social movements, with 75.86% (n=88) choosing the topic.

When asked how people would react to the content they see, 61.42% (n=78) people responded that they would at least like the post, while 35.43% (n=45) of the participants said they usually didn't agree with the content. When cross tabbing these actions with participants ages, 3.14% (n=4) people agreed and reacted with more than a like were those between the ages of 33 and 41 as well as participants over the age of 50. This reflects Bouvier & Machin's (2021) perspective that when popular movements involve hashtags, they gain more attention, providing people the opportunity to learn more about the topics.

When reacting to certain topics within cancel culture, over half of the participants, 61.42% (n=78), would like the posts that they agreed with the most, while the next majority of participants, 35.43% (n=45), would not agree with the content they came across. Others would react differently by commenting, sharing, reposting, or creating a new post entirely. The only people that did agree with statements and their first response was to do more than a like were participants that were between the ages of 33 and 41 as well as participants over the age of 50. This research suggests that participants aren't as engaged with content within cancel culture as past research suggests. However, a majority of participants, 90.54% (n=115) of people, agreed that their opinions were at least somewhat valid when it comes to discussions with cancel culture. Therefore, these results suggest that those participants tend to stay relatively quiet, but have an understanding as to why others would speak out about certain topics. Twitter allows people to freely speak their mind on any topic which can take many forms of feedback. Bouvier & Machin (2021) explain that there hasn't been a lot of research behind Twitter debates, therefore, it may seem as though no one seems to pay attention to detail when discussing issues.

When given the statement "I feel as though people should do further research on news stories they see on social media", 82.68% (n=105) of people strongly agreed with the statement.

Cross tabbing this information with the participants' ages found that 42.52% (n=54) were between the ages of 18 and 25. Past research shows that social media has allowed journalists to amplify conversations with little to no context. Most information online is posted in order to entertain as opposed to providing people with important information (Valenzuela et al., 2017). Participant answers varied when suggesting whether their social media feeds are diverse in the information it is providing to them. The majority of people, 28.35% (n=36), had a neutral response. This percentage was heavily impacted by those whose ages ranged from 18 to 25, with 14.17% (n=18) of them in that category. This age group also had the largest number of people who agreed with this statement. Arugete and Calvo (2018) explain that the more varied a social media feed is, the more someone will be able to debate and know what is going on in the world around them. The participants in this survey suggest that those whose ages are between 18 and 25, in the younger generations, have more of an understanding that not everything seen online should be taken seriously.

In regards to people's reasoning for calling others out, participants were asked whether they thought calling people out on social media represented accountability or unjust punishment. 35.43% (n=45) said it represented neither, however, 25.20% (n=32) of people chose accountability and 25.20% (n=32) of people chose both. However, over half of the participants didn't feel as though holding someone accountable for past actions should qualify them for a cancellation. This research suggests that participants mostly felt that the acts of canceling are to hold people accountable for their actions, but sometimes just the act of acknowledging people's behaviors are just as effective. 70.08% (n=89) felt as though people rush to judge people before knowing the truth. As for celebrity content within cancel culture, 43.31% (n=55) of people were neutral to the fact that they will view a canceled celebrity's work after they have been canceled

by the media. When it comes to celebrities, people tend to have mixed feelings about their actions depending on what they have done and who they are. Kannen (2020) pointed out that celebrities are hesitant to speak out on certain topics because they never know how people will respond.