

Consumers' justice perceptions and attitudes toward cancel culture: Evidence from Millennials and Generation Z



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ABSTRACT

This study examines how justice perceptions influence consumers' support for cancel culture decisions, particularly whether they choose to cancel or continue supporting an influencer and the related brand. Based on justice theory, the study distinguishes between distributive and procedural justice applied to others and to oneself. Subjective norms are introduced as a mediating factor to explain how these justice perceptions translate into support for cancel culture. In addition, the study examines generational differences between Millennials and Generation Z, two cohorts that are highly engaged with social media but may differ in their ethical expectations and sanctioning behaviors. Survey data were collected from 200 Millennials and 200 Generation Z consumers and analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The findings reveal a notable self-other asymmetry in justice evaluation: consumers tend to judge the actions of others more strictly than their own, indicating that perceptions of injustice directed at public figures are more likely to trigger support for cancel culture than personal justice considerations. Furthermore, the positive moderating coefficient suggests a possible tendency for Generation Z to be more influenced by social pressure and collective opinions when forming attitudes toward cancel culture.

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1. Introduction

The expansion of social media has significantly changed how consumers evaluate and respond to the behavior of public figures, influencers, and organizations. Within digital environments, cancel culture has emerged as a collective form of public criticism directed toward individuals or entities perceived to have violated ethical or social expectations. Unlike formal institutional sanctions, cancel culture operates through online public judgment, often leading to reputational damage, consumer backlash, and social exclusion (Clark, 2020). As influencer marketing continues to grow, cancel culture has become increasingly important in marketing and consumer behavior research. Influencers are often viewed as symbolic representatives of brands, meaning that public reactions toward influencers can directly affect brand trust, authenticity, and consumer attitudes

(Lou and Yuan, 2019). In many cases, public responses are influenced not only by objective facts but also by perceptions of fairness, legitimacy, and accountability. Justice perception theory provides a useful framework for understanding these reactions. In digital contexts, individuals evaluate whether outcomes are fair (distributive justice) and whether processes are transparent and appropriate (procedural justice). Existing studies suggest that justice perceptions strongly influence attitudes and evaluations in social settings. However, limited research has examined how justice perceptions shape attitudes toward cancel culture. Previous research also indicates that individuals may evaluate themselves and others differently when making moral judgments. Existing studies on cancel culture suggest that justice-related beliefs influence individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and evaluations toward cancel culture behavior in digital environments (Roldan et al., 2024).

Because cancel culture primarily involves public evaluation of others' behavior, justice perceptions directed toward others may play a particularly important role in shaping public attitudes. Generational differences may further influence these relationships. Millennials and Generation Z are highly active social media users who are more likely to engage in online discussions, ethical debates, and

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collective digital reactions. Prior studies suggest that younger generations place greater importance on transparency, ethical consistency, and immediate accountability in online environments (Twenge, 2017).

Despite increasing academic interest in cancel culture, several gaps remain in the literature. Existing studies have largely focused on Western contexts, while limited attention has been given to smaller and highly interconnected digital markets. In addition, few studies have examined distributive and procedural justice perceptions simultaneously or distinguished between self-oriented and other-oriented justice evaluations in the context of cancel culture. Therefore, this study investigates how distributive and procedural justice perceptions influence subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture among Millennials and Generation Z consumers. By examining justice perceptions for self and others separately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of moral judgment and ethical evaluation in digital consumer environments.

Mongolia provides a relevant context for examining cancel culture due to its high social media usage and relatively small, socially interconnected population. Online platforms play a major role in public communication, influencer marketing, and consumer interaction, allowing reputational information to spread rapidly. In recent years, cancel culture has become increasingly visible in Mongolia's digital environment, where public figures, influencers, and brands are frequently subjected to collective online criticism and boycott movements (Tsog and Gantulga, 2026).

Several controversies involving influencers and public figures in Mongolia have generated widespread online criticism, boycott behavior, and reputational damage. Previous research conducted in the Mongolian context suggests that consumers' justice beliefs and perceptions of fairness significantly influence cancel/boycott attitudes toward social media influencers (Tsog and Gantulga, 2026). Public reactions are often driven by perceived ethical inconsistency, unfairness, or violations of social expectations rather than solely by confirmed factual evidence.

These cases illustrate how online communities in Mongolia actively participate in collective moral judgment through digital platforms. Due to the country's high social proximity and rapid information diffusion, cancel culture in Mongolia may function as an informal mechanism of public accountability. Accordingly, Mongolia represents an important yet underexplored setting for understanding how justice perceptions influence attitudes toward cancel culture.

2. Literature review

2.1. Cancel culture

Cancel culture refers to a collective social response in which individuals, brands, or

organizations perceived to have violated moral or social norms are publicly criticized and subjected to social or economic exclusion. Unlike traditional consumer boycotts that primarily involve withdrawing economic support, cancel culture extends beyond economic disengagement by incorporating public condemnation, reputational sanctions, and calls for collective accountability (Ng, 2020).

Scholarly studies on cancel culture offer varying conceptualizations of the phenomenon; however, three core elements consistently emerge across the literature: (a) the public denunciation or shaming of behavior perceived as normatively unacceptable, (b) the withdrawal of social or economic support, and (c) the intention to impose consequences on the targeted individual or entity, such as loss of employment, reduced income opportunities, social exclusion, or symbolic and actual forms of professional or public banishment (Tandoc et al., 2024). Consumers express dissatisfaction with corporate actions or influencer behavior through public criticism, negative discourse, and calls for social or economic sanctions, which may result in reputational damage and declining consumer trust (Hegner et al., 2017; Muhamad et al., 2019). Social media further amplifies these responses by allowing users to share information, mobilize support, and reinforce collective judgments in real time (Clark, 2020). According to Aguiar et al. (2025), cancel culture is a modern version of the "court of public opinion," and it is both assisted and amplified by social media platforms. Consequently, cancel culture has become an increasingly influential mechanism through which consumers enforce ethical standards in digital markets.

2.2. Justice perceptions

Justice perception refers to individuals' evaluations of fairness regarding outcomes, decision-making procedures, and interpersonal treatment within social and institutional contexts. Contemporary justice research suggests that fairness perceptions function as moral judgments that shape emotional reactions and behavioral intentions, particularly in situations involving accountability and norm enforcement (Colquitt et al., 2012; Rupp et al., 2014). While justice research has traditionally focused on organizational settings and employee-related outcomes, recent studies in consumer behavior and marketing research have demonstrated that fairness evaluations increasingly shape individual behavior in broader social environments, including online interactions and public discourse (Shao and Ho, 2025). In digital contexts, individuals frequently assess whether the actions of public figures, influencers, or companies violate socially accepted standards of fairness and accountability. Such justice evaluations may subsequently influence support for corrective or punitive responses, including engagement in or endorsement of cancel culture practices.

2.3. Distributive and procedural justice

Justice perceptions are commonly conceptualized through two core dimensions: distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of outcome allocations, such as rewards, punishments, or benefits (Colquitt et al., 2012; Yoruk et al., 2025). Additionally, distributive justice can be understood as the perceived equity of an exchange, evaluated by comparing inputs and outcomes against a relevant reference standard (Shao and Ho, 2025).

In contrast, procedural justice concerns the perceived fairness of the processes used to determine those outcomes and the methods employed to address negative events (Colquitt et al., 2012; Yoruk et al., 2025). Prior research suggests that procedural justice strongly influences individuals' reactions, as fair procedures signal legitimacy, respect, and moral integrity, even when outcomes are unfavorable (Tyler and Blader, 2003). Procedural justice differs from distributive justice because it focuses on people's perceptions of fairness based on the degree of control they have over decision-making processes, rather than on the outcomes those decisions produce (Shao and Ho, 2025). In socially visible environments such as social media, individuals often rely on both distributive and procedural cues to determine whether a behavior or decision violates accepted standards of fairness. When actions are perceived as unjust, individuals may support corrective responses, including public condemnation or calls for accountability.

2.4. Justice for self vs. justice for others

An important insight from social psychological research is that justice perceptions may differ depending on whether individuals evaluate their own outcomes or those of others. Individuals often apply more lenient standards when judging situations that involve themselves while imposing stricter moral standards when evaluating the actions of others. Lucas et al. (2026) stated that justice for others frequently leads to harsh social attitudes, whereas beliefs about justice for oneself typically anticipate better health and well-being. This asymmetry is commonly explained by self-serving bias and motivated reasoning, which lead individuals to justify or minimize unfairness that benefits them personally (Effron and Miller, 2015; Epley and Caruso, 2004).

In contrast, justice perceptions directed toward others tend to be more strongly grounded in moral principles and third-party evaluations of fairness violations, making them more likely to evoke moralized reactions such as condemnation and punishment (Janoff-Bulman and Carnes, 2014; Skitka et al., 2005). Within the context of cancel culture, moral judgments are predominantly observer-oriented because individuals evaluate whether public actors deserve social sanction. As a result,

perceptions of justice directed toward others may exert stronger influence on public attitudes toward cancel culture than justice perceptions directed toward oneself.

2.5. Subjective norms

Subjective norms refer to individuals' perceptions of social discrimination regarding whether a particular behavior should be performed (Ajzen, 1991). Rather than reflecting objective public opinion, subjective norms capture how individuals internalize perceived expectations from their social environment, including peers, communities, and online networks. In highly visible digital environments, individuals often align their behavior with perceived social expectations in order to avoid criticism, exclusion, or reputational damage (Kim and Sundar, 2012).

Cancel culture can therefore be interpreted as a form of collectively enforced moral sanction in which individuals respond not only to personal moral evaluations but also to perceived expectations from others. When individuals perceive strong social pressure supporting condemnation, they may be more likely to participate in canceling behaviors to signal alignment with prevailing moral norms (Ng, 2020). Subjective norms are an essential factor in behavioral intention (Gantulga et al., 2022) and strongly drive cancel culture, with social media amplifying collective pressure, particularly among Gen Z and millennials who are motivated to express their disapproval publicly.

Based on the theoretical background, the following hypotheses are proposed (Fig. 1):

- H1:** Distributive justice for others positively influences subjective norms toward cancel culture.
- H2:** Procedural justice for others positively influences subjective norms toward cancel culture.
- H3:** Distributive justice for self positively influences subjective norms toward cancel culture.
- H4:** Procedural justice for self positively influences subjective norms toward cancel culture.
- H5:** Subjective norms positively influence attitudes toward cancel culture.
- H6:** Generation (Millennial/Generation Z) moderates the relationship between subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design using a structured online questionnaire to examine how justice perceptions influence attitudes towards cancel culture among Millennial and Generation Z consumers. Data were collected in Mongolia, where social media plays an increasingly important role in shaping consumer opinions and public discourse. The target population consisted of consumers belonging to Millennial and Generation Z cohorts who actively use social media platforms and are therefore more likely to encounter and engage

with cancel culture phenomena. Participants were recruited using an online convenience sampling approach, primarily through major social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which are widely used by young consumers in Mongolia. The survey link was distributed through university student communities, online consumer groups, and social media networks to reach respondents who are actively engaged in digital environments.

To enable comparative analysis between generational cohorts, the study intentionally

collected an equal number of responses from each generation. Specifically, 200 respondents from the Millennials and 200 respondents from Generation Z. This balanced sampling approach allows for a more reliable comparison of perceptions and behavioral tendencies related to cancel culture across the two generational groups. The survey was conducted between November 2025 and December 2025. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous works on justice perceptions and consumer behavioral responses.

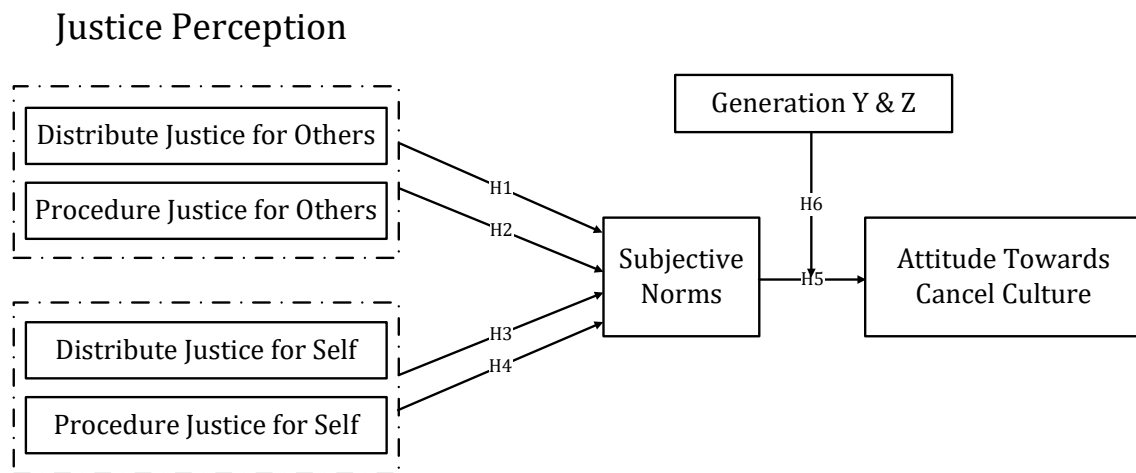


Fig. 1: Research model

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants. The sample consisted of 61.7% female and 38.3% male respondents. Millennials and Generation Z participants were equally represented, each accounting for 50% of the sample, allowing meaningful comparison between the two generational groups. In terms of income level, the highest percentage of respondents reported a monthly household income between 1,000,001-3,000,000 tugriks (31.5%), followed by 3,000,001-5,000,000 tugriks (26%). In terms of education level, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree (80%), 11% had completed high school, and 9% had a master's or doctoral degree.

Table 1: Demographic information of participants

Variables	Data	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	153	38.3%
	Women	247	61.7%
Generation	Millennials	200	50%
	Generation Z	200	50%
	Up to 1.000.000	74	18.5%
Household income (MNT)	1.000.001-3.000.000	125	31.5%
	3.000.001-5.000.000	105	26%
	5.000.000-more	95	24%
	High school	45	11%
Education	Undergraduate	320	80%
	Graduate (MSc/PhD)	35	9%
Total		400	100%

The measurement items used in this study were adapted from previously tested and reported in previous studies. Using established measurement

scales enhances construct validity and ensures consistency with prior research. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The justice perception construct was adapted from the Belief in a Just World (BJW) scale developed by Lucas et al. (2007). This construct captures individuals' perceptions of justice in distributive and procedural contexts. The constructs attitude toward cancel culture, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were adapted from the Theory of Planned Behavior framework proposed by Ajzen (1991). In total, the survey instrument consisted of 18 measurement items representing six constructs, in addition to demographic questions.

4. Results

4.1. Data analysis procedure

The data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 and SmartPLS 4, both well-known statistical software packages in social science research. Structural equation modeling (SEM) has increasingly been applied as an analytical technique across many academic disciplines because it enables researchers to examine complex relationships among latent variables. Among the different SEM techniques, the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach has attracted considerable attention due to its flexibility in handling complex research models, non-normally distributed data, and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2014).

In this study, SPSS was used for preliminary data analysis, including descriptive statistics and data screening procedures. Meanwhile, SmartPLS 4 was employed to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the structural relationships among the constructs. When the primary objective of a study is prediction and theory development, PLS-SEM is

considered particularly suitable because its statistical power is generally equal to or greater than that of covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) (Reinartz et al., 2009). This research investigated the stated hypotheses using structural model path coefficients at a significant level (Fig. 2).

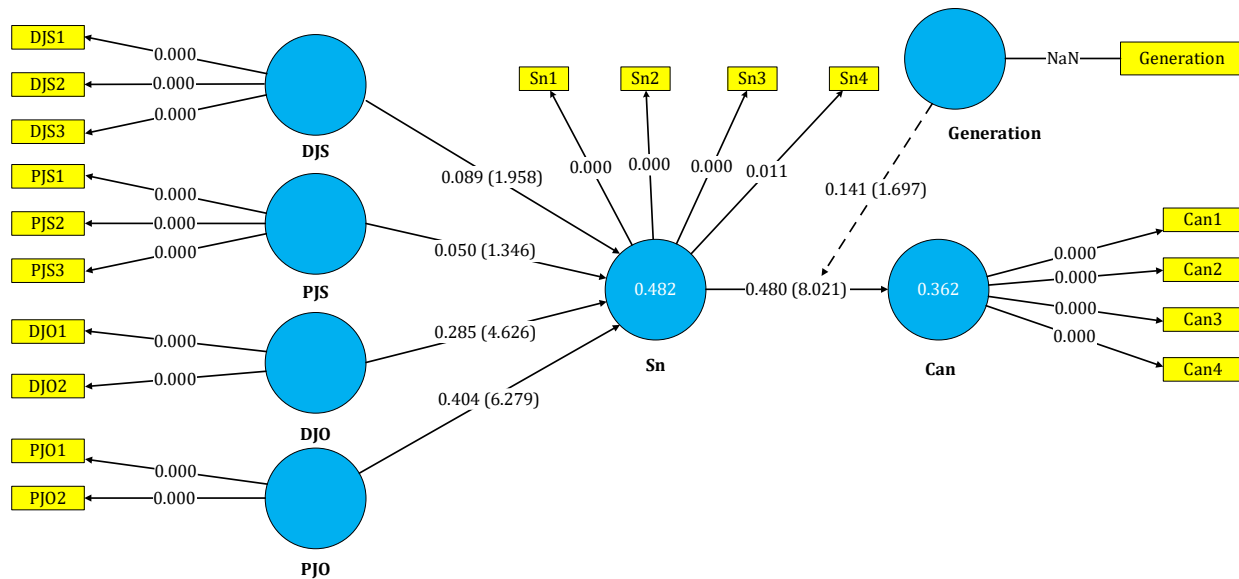


Fig. 2: Smart PLS t-test results

4.2. Measurement model

The reliability and validity of the study's constructs were examined to validate the measurement model. Based on criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2019), internal consistency was measured via Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was determined through average variance extracted (AVE). All scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients consistently exceeding the 0.70 benchmark. Additionally, CR values fell between 0.86 and 0.92, well above the 0.70 cut-off point. Convergent validity was also confirmed, as AVE values for every construct were higher than 0.50, indicating that the measurement items effectively represent their respective latent constructs. Overall, the results presented in Table 2 indicate that the model meets the necessary standards for reliability and validity, providing a solid foundation for further structural testing.

Table 2: Measurement model results

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Distributive justice for others	0.81	0.88	0.65
Procedural justice for others	0.83	0.89	0.67
Distributive justice for self	0.85	0.91	0.70
Procedural justice for self	0.86	0.92	0.72
Subjective norms	0.82	0.88	0.64
Attitude toward cancel culture	0.84	0.90	0.69

4.3. Hypotheses results

The proposed hypotheses were examined using structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) through

SmartPLS 4. The significance of the relationships among the constructs was evaluated using path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. Following common practice in SEM analysis, this study adopts $p < 0.05$ as the threshold for statistical significance. In addition, exact p-values are reported for all hypothesis tests to provide greater transparency and allow readers to independently evaluate the strength of the statistical evidence. Results with p-values greater than or equal to 0.05 are interpreted as statistically non-significant. The results show that Distributive Justice for Others (DJO) has a positive and statistically significant effect on Subjective Norms ($\beta = 0.285$, $t = 4.626$, $p < 0.010$). Therefore, H1 was supported. This finding suggests that individuals who believe that others receive fair outcomes are more likely to perceive stronger social expectations regarding cancel culture behavior. Similarly, Procedural Justice for Others (PJO) was found to have a positive and significant effect on Subjective Norms ($\beta = 0.404$, $t = 6.279$, $p < 0.010$). Thus, H2 was supported. This result indicates that when individuals perceive fairness in procedures affecting others, they are more likely to align their perceptions with prevailing social norms related to cancel culture. The analysis further revealed that Distributive Justice for Self (DJS) has a marginal but statistically significant influence on Subjective Norms ($\beta = 0.089$, $t = 1.958$, $p = 0.050$). Thus, H3 was supported. Although the relationship is weaker compared with other justice constructs, the result still indicates that personal perceptions of fairness may contribute to the formation of social

expectations in cancel culture contexts. However, Procedural Justice for Self (PJS) did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on Subjective Norms ($\beta = 0.050$, $t = 1.346$, $p = 0.178$). Therefore, H4 was not supported. One possible explanation for the insignificant effect of Procedural Justice for Self is that cancel culture primarily involves the public evaluation of others rather than concerns about fairness toward oneself. In digital cancel culture contexts, individuals are more likely to focus on whether influencers or public figures receive fair treatment and appropriate consequences, rather than reflecting on their own procedural fairness experiences. This finding suggests that observer-oriented justice perceptions may be more influential than self-oriented justice perceptions when shaping attitudes toward cancel culture. In addition, the results indicate that Subjective Norms have a strong and positive effect on Attitude Toward Cancel Culture ($\beta = 0.480$, $t = 8.021$, $p < 0.010$).

Consequently, H5 was supported, suggesting that perceived social pressure plays an important role in shaping individuals' attitudes toward cancel culture behavior. H6 proposed that generation moderates the relationship between subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture. The results revealed a marginal moderating effect ($\beta = 0.141$, $t = 1.697$, $p = 0.090$), suggesting that generational differences may slightly influence how subjective norms shape attitudes toward cancel culture. Although the effect did not meet the conventional 0.05 significance threshold, the findings imply that Millennials and Generation Z may respond differently to social pressure and collective online opinions in digital environments. This result may indicate that younger generations are somewhat more sensitive to social influence and online community expectations when forming attitudes toward cancel culture. The detailed results of the structural model analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Path coefficient results

Hypotheses	Relationship	B (original sample)	STDEV	T-statistics	P-value	Result
H1	DJO → subjective norms	0.285	0.062	4.626	0.000***	Supported
H2	PJO → subjective norms	0.404	0.064	6.279	0.000***	Supported
H3	DJS → subjective norms	0.089	0.046	1.958	0.050**	Supported
H4	PJS → Subjective Norms	0.050	0.037	1.346	0.178	Not supported
H5	Subjective norms → attitude toward cancel culture	0.480	0.060	8.021	0.000***	Supported
H6	Generation × subjective norms → attitude toward cancel culture	0.141	0.083	1.697	0.090*	Marginally Moderated

***: $p < 0.00$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$

The results of the multi-group analysis, presented in Table 4, indicate that the relationship between subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture differs across generations. Specifically, the effect of subjective norms on attitudes toward cancel culture is stronger among Generation Z ($\beta = 0.57$) compared with Millennials ($\beta = 0.32$), with a difference of 0.25 between the two groups. The difference between the groups is statistically significant ($p = 0.021$), suggesting that generational differences play a meaningful role in shaping this relationship. These findings indicate that Generation Z consumers are more strongly influenced by social pressure and the opinions of others when forming attitudes toward cancel culture. In other words, when subjective norms increase, Generation Z individuals are more likely than Millennial individuals to develop favorable attitudes toward cancel culture behaviors. The detailed comparison of the path coefficients between the two generational groups is reported in Table 4.

4.4. Common method bias assessment

To assess the potential presence of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was performed because all data were obtained through a single self-reported survey instrument (Podsakoff et al., 2003). All questionnaire items were loaded into an unrotated exploratory factor analysis. The analysis indicated that the first factor explained 34% of the total variance, which is lower than the

commonly accepted threshold of 50%. Accordingly, common method bias was not considered a substantial concern in the present study (Table 5).

5. Discussion

This study examined how justice perceptions shape consumer support for cancel culture and whether generational differences influence this process in digital markets. By distinguishing between justice perceptions directed toward oneself and those directed toward others, the findings provide important insight into the moral dynamics underlying cancel culture behavior. Justice perceptions represent individuals' evaluations of fairness in outcomes and decision-making processes and often function as moral judgments guiding behavioral responses in social contexts (Colquitt et al., 2012; Rupp et al., 2014).

The results indicate that justice perceptions directed toward others play a stronger role in shaping social expectations about cancel culture than justice perceptions directed toward oneself. Both distributive justice for others and procedural justice for others significantly influence subjective norms, suggesting that individuals who perceive unfair outcomes or unfair procedures affecting others are more likely to perceive stronger social expectations to condemn such actions. These findings support the argument that cancel culture primarily operates through third-party moral evaluations rather than personal experiences of injustice. In digital

environments, users frequently judge the behavior of public figures, influencers, and organizations from an observer perspective, which strengthens moral reactions to perceived wrongdoing (Clark, 2020; Skitka et al., 2005).

In contrast, justice perceptions directed toward oneself demonstrate weaker effects. Although distributive justice for self shows a marginal influence on subjective norms, procedural justice for self does not produce a statistically significant relationship. These results suggest that individuals apply less stringent fairness standards when evaluating situations involving themselves. Such findings are consistent with social psychological research on self-serving bias and moral hypocrisy, which suggests that individuals tend to justify or minimize unfairness that benefits them personally while applying stricter ethical standards when

evaluating others (Effron and Miller, 2015; Epley and Caruso, 2004). Within the context of cancel culture, this asymmetry implies that individuals may be more willing to condemn or punish perceived wrongdoing by public actors than to critically evaluate similar behaviors in their own actions. The results also highlight the central role of subjective norms in shaping attitudes toward cancel culture. Subjective norms refer to individuals' perceptions of social pressure regarding whether a behavior should be performed (Ajzen, 1991). The strong positive relationship between subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture indicates that individuals are highly responsive to perceived social expectations in online environments. When users believe that others expect condemnation or collective action, they are more likely to adopt favorable attitudes toward canceling behavior.

Table 4: Multi-Group Analysis Results (Millennial vs Generation Z)

Path	Millennial (β)	Generation Z (β)	Difference	p-value	Result
Subjective norm $\rightarrow$ attitude toward cancel culture	0.32	0.57	0.25	0.021	Gen Z stronger

Table 5: Common method bias assessment

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	8.154	34.0	34.0
Factor 2	3.276	13.7	47.7
Factor 3	2.114	8.8	56.5

This finding supports prior research suggesting that social media platforms amplify collective moral judgments and encourage individuals to align their behavior with dominant public opinions (Brady et al., 2017; Kim and Sundar, 2012; Ng, 2020). An additional contribution of this study lies in identifying generational differences in cancel culture dynamics. The moderation analysis indicates that generation influences the relationship between subjective norms and attitudes toward cancel culture, and the multi-group analysis further reveals that this relationship is significantly stronger among Generation Z than Millennials. Specifically, the effect of subjective norms on cancel culture attitudes is substantially stronger for Generation Z ($\beta = 0.57$) compared to Millennials ($\beta = 0.32$). This result suggests that younger consumers are more responsive to social pressure and collective judgments in digital environments. These generational differences may reflect broader shifts in how ethical accountability is enacted in contemporary digital culture. Generation Z has grown up in highly networked social media environments where public visibility, peer evaluation, and rapid information diffusion are integral features of everyday social interaction. As a result, they may perceive canceling behavior as a legitimate way to enforce ethical standards and signal moral alignment with their communities. By contrast, millennials may be more likely to observe ethical controversies without actively participating in collective sanctioning behaviors. Prior research also suggests that younger generations place greater emphasis on transparency, ethical accountability, and public expression of moral values in digital

spaces (Twenge, 2017). In other words, the results reveal a clear generational difference in cancel culture behavior. Generation Z consumers are more likely to engage in canceling actions, whereas Millennials tend to continue supporting influencers or public figures despite ethical controversies.

6. Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing literature on cancellation culture by examining how perceptions of fairness in digital markets influence consumers' attitudes toward cancellation behavior. By distinguishing between justice perceptions directed toward oneself and those directed toward others, the findings reveal an important asymmetry in moral judgment. Consumers appear to apply stricter fairness standards when evaluating the behavior of public figures, influencers, and organizations than when evaluating situations involving themselves. This self-other asymmetry helps explain why cancel culture often emerges as a response to perceived injustice directed at others.

The results also highlight the important role of subjective norms in shaping cancel culture attitudes. Individuals are strongly influenced by perceived social expectations when deciding whether to support canceling behaviors. In highly visible social media environments, collective moral judgments can quickly create social pressure that encourages individuals to align with prevailing opinions. Moreover, the study demonstrates that generational differences play a meaningful role in cancel culture dynamics. Generation Z consumers are more responsive to social pressure and collective judgments than Millennials, making them more likely to support cancel culture actions when they perceive strong normative expectations from their social environment. This suggests that younger generations are more inclined to translate moral

judgments into observable actions within digital spaces. From a managerial perspective, these findings offer important implications for businesses and influencers operating in socially connected digital environments. Organizations should recognize that ethical controversies involving influencers or brand representatives may trigger strong public reactions, particularly among younger audiences. Effective reputation management strategies should therefore emphasize transparency, fairness, and timely responses to ethical concerns in order to reduce the likelihood of collective backlash. Overall, this study demonstrates that cancel culture functions as a market-driven mechanism of ethical accountability shaped by justice perceptions, social influence, and generational differences. By integrating these perspectives, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how moral judgments are translated into collective consumer actions in contemporary digital markets.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the data were collected through Facebook-based online surveys, which may have resulted in sampling bias. Because participation was voluntary and limited to social media users, the sample may not accurately represent the broader consumer population. Individuals who are more active on digital platforms may hold different views toward cancel culture compared to less active users.

Second, the study relied entirely on self-reported responses. As a result, the findings may be influenced by social desirability bias or respondents' subjective interpretations of cancel culture situations. Participants may not always express their genuine opinions or reactions in online survey settings.

Third, this study examined attitudes toward cancel culture rather than actual canceling behavior. Although respondents may report supportive or unfavorable attitudes, these attitudes do not necessarily translate into real online actions. This limitation reflects the commonly discussed attitude-behavior gap in consumer and social behavior research.

Finally, the study used a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between justice perceptions and attitudes toward cancel culture. Since the data were collected at a single point in time, changes in consumer perceptions and reactions over time could not be observed.

List of abbreviations

AVE	Average variance extracted
BJW	Belief in a just world
CB-SEM	Covariance-based structural equation modeling
CR	Composite reliability
DJO	Distributive justice for others
DJS	Distributive justice for self
Gen Z	Generation Z

MNT	Mongolian tögrög
PJO	Procedural justice for others
PJS	Procedural justice for self
PLS-SEM	Partial least squares structural equation modeling
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SPSS	Statistical package for the social sciences
STDEV	Standard deviation

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

The authors confirm that participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, and all participants provided informed consent. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of social science research.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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