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CO-CREATED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Goodness is the only investment that never fails.

– Henry David Thoreau

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Resumo

O assunto abordado nesta tese é a emergente co-criação *online* de iniciativas de Responsabilidade Social das Empresas (RSE). Sendo que as abordagens tradicionais de comunicação de RSE se têm revelado incapazes de aumentar a *awareness* e o *engagement* dos *stakeholders*, muitas vezes não conseguindo melhorar as relações com os consumidores, o presente estudo focou-se numa nova metodologia para implementar estas atividades: um processo mais participativo, onde as organizações e os *stakeholders* estendem a co-criação de produtos de consumo às iniciativas de responsabilidade social.

Existe ainda escassa pesquisa na literatura de RSE sobre as oportunidades oferecidas pelas atividades participativas e como elas afetam a *awareness* e o *engagement* nas redes sociais. Assim, o principal objetivo neste estudo foi examinar se as organizações que envolvem os seus *stakeholders* nas redes sociais com abordagens co-criativas, permitindo que eles sejam participantes ativos e decisores nas atividades *online* de RSE, poderão ser mais eficazes na construção de *awareness*, aumentando o *empowerment* e os níveis de participação dos seus stakeholders, do que as empresas que utilizam o design e a comunicação tradicionais dessas atividades, onde os *stakeholders* não participam no processo e são simplesmente considerados agentes passivos.

De forma a abordar o objetivo desta tese, foi analisado um exemplo verídico de uma iniciativa *online* participativa de RSE, e foi igualmente realizado um questionário online, que reuniu 322 respostas válidas.

Os resultados forneceram fortes evidências de que a co-criação de atividades de responsabilidade social nas redes sociais pode, de fato, aumentar não só a *awareness* para tais iniciativas, como pode igualmente aumentar a perceção de controlo dos stakeholders, os níveis de participação, a difusão de *WoM* positivo e reforçar os laços entre marca e consumidor no decorrer do processo.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade Social das Empresas; Co-criação; Redes Sociais; Comunicação.

JEL: M31 Marketing e **M14** Responsabilidade Social

Abstract

The subject addressed in this thesis is the emerging online co-created Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As the traditional approaches on CSR communication are revealing to be unable of raising awareness and increasing stakeholder engagement, often failing to improve positive relationships with consumers, the present research focused on a new methodology for implementing such activities: a more participatory process, where organizations and stakeholders extend co-creation from consumption products to social responsibility initiatives.

There is still little research in the CSR literature about the opportunities offered by participatory activities and how they affect awareness and engagement in social media environments.

Thus, the main purpose of the current research was to examine if organizations that engage stakeholders in social media with co-creative approaches, allowing them to be active participants and decision-makers in their online CSR activities, can be more effective in building awareness, increasing stakeholders' empowerment and participation levels, than firms who use the conventional design and communication of these activities, where the stakeholder has no participation in the process and is merely taken as a passive agent.

In order to address the purpose of this thesis, a real online participatory CSR initiative was examined and an online questionnaire was also conducted, which gathered 322 valid responses.

Results provided strong evidence that co-creating socially responsible activities in social media can indeed increase not only the awareness for such actions, but also increase empowerment, participation levels, positive WoM dissemination, and reinforce consumer-brand ties in the process.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Co-creation; Social Media; Communication.

JEL: M31 Marketing and **M14** Social Responsibility

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List of Abbreviations

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

ICT – International Conference on Telecommunications

PB – Participatory Budgeting

SNS – Social Networking Sites

WBCSD – World Business Council for Sustainable Development

WoM – Word-of-Mouth

1. Introduction

1.1 Thesis Theme

The subject addressed in this thesis is the emerging online co-created Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

As the traditional approach on CSR is revealing to be incapable of raising awareness and increasing the stakeholders' engagement, this research will focus on a new methodology for these activities: a more participatory process, where organizations and stakeholders extend co-creation from consumption products to CSR initiatives.

1.2 Research Context

Nowadays, it has become imperative that brands understand how to make proper use of social media platforms and how to interact with people (not only consumers but also other stakeholders). Previous studies have demonstrated that a brand's online image is just as important as its offline image, and possibly even more important (Hollenbeek & Kaikati, 2012): when compared to the offline environment, the online environment offers more opportunities for interactive and personalized marketing (Shankar et al., 2003), and some researchers have shown that mini-connections with consumers created through social networking can yield positive effects on brand evaluations and purchase intentions (Naylor et al., 2012). Others, for example, referred that engaged consumers exhibit enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, empowerment, connection, emotional bonding, trust, commitment, stronger consumer–brand relationships and positive word of mouth communications (Brodie et al., 2011; Hudson et al., 2016).

However, only some organizations are actually reaping the full benefits of social media, with only a few using them to communicate about corporate responsibility topics (Ros-Diego & Martinez, 2011). Traditionally, the main approaches for communicating CSR activities have been the dedicated sections in corporate websites and annual reports. Despite aiming to illustrate the increasingly importance that firms are giving to such activities, there are already some doubts about the effectiveness of these communication channels as the awareness levels of CSR initiatives has revealed to be fairly low (Chaudhri, 2016; Sen et al., 2006).

Although some recent studies focused in building consumer–brand relationships through digitally co-created social responsibility (Kull & Heath, 2016), there is still little research regarding how these activities affect awareness and engagement in social media environments and how a brand should design and communicate them in such channels, in order to achieve the best results.

Furthermore, the studies that began to examine this innovative methodology of implementing CSR were also just focused on activities that were tied to a product or service purchase, thus somehow overlooking the participatory approaches in activities that did not represent an expense for stakeholders.

In this study, the digitally co-created CSR activities will be explored using a more general approach, which will also take into consideration these philanthropic activities, i.e. the activities where companies invite stakeholders to participate in the resolution of a social issue but without asking them to buy the brand's products.

Moreover, in the present study, interactivity and freedom of cause choice are both believed to be two mechanisms that play a key role in generating more empowered stakeholders, with increased propensity for participating in co-created CSR initiatives.
Therefore, it is important to analyse digitally co-created CSR activities in this research since it may represent a major opportunity for organizations to add value and meaning to stakeholders (and even for society at large), where the two parties work together to solve a social issue.

1.3 Research Objectives

There seems to exist a gap in the scholarly literature regarding the comparison between traditional versus new CSR communication channels, especially when it comes to the effectiveness of Social Networking Sites (SNS) as a channel that opens up the possibility for more interactivity and two-way communication.

This thesis aims to provide an overview of the emerging co-creative CSR initiatives and its opportunities in digital channels, with a particular focus on Social Networking Sites.

It intends to examine if organizations that engage stakeholders in SNS with co-creative approaches, allowing them to be active participants in their online CSR activities, can be more effective in building awareness and increasing interactivity and participation levels (both antecedents of engagement), than companies who use the conventional design and

communication of these activities (e.g. the dedicated sections in corporate annual reports and websites), where the stakeholder has no participation in the process and is merely taken as a passive agent.

As mentioned earlier, interactivity and freedom of cause choice are both believed to be two dynamics that play an important role in generating more empowered stakeholders, with increased propensity for participating in online co-created CSR initiatives.

Thus, the main objectives for this thesis are 1) to compare traditional CSR communication vs Participatory Online CSR activities, and their awareness potential, and 2) to capture the branding outcomes of engaging stakeholders, using participatory CSR approaches in social media.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with an introduction, where it is briefly explained the subject addressed, the rationale of the study and the problem verified, and its main objectives.

After the introduction, the next section is the literature review, where it will be discussed in depth a set of topics that are interconnected with the co-creation of online CSR activities. This section will be divided in (i) the changes in consumer behaviour, which will scrutinize the evolution from consumers passive to active roles; (ii) the opportunities offered by social media; and the concepts of (iii) Corporate Social Responsibility and (iv) Participation, while analysing their challenges in a digital context.

In the following section, the research design used in this thesis is presented, including the testing hypotheses, scaling and measuring instruments, data collection and data analysis techniques used in order to sustain scientifically the empirical research.

In the Analysis and Results section, the data previously obtained will be meaningfully explained throughout the following sub-sections: (i) sample characterization; (ii) characterizing social media behaviours; (iii) characterizing awareness towards CSR initiatives; (iv) participatory CSR: Branding Outcomes; (v) the effect of adding cause-choice on empowerment and (vi) the analysis of a veridical participatory CSR activity.

In the Conclusion section, the same will be divided in (i): main findings, where it will be discussed the major contributions of the study, which hopefully managed to bridge the gap in the existing literature; (ii) the managerial implications, where it will be made some

recommendations regarding the implementation of online co-created CSR activities by organizations; and (iii) the limitations and possible ways to surpass them in further research.

After the conclusions, all the bibliographic references cited throughout this study are compiled and presented.

Finally, the thesis ends with the remaining materials being organized and placed in the Annexes section.

2. Literature review

This section will be divided into several sub-sections, in order to discuss in depth a set of topics that are interrelated with the co-creation of online CSR activities.

Accordingly, the section will be divided in (i) the changes in consumer behaviour, which will scrutinize the evolution from consumers passive to active roles; (ii) the opportunities offered by social media; and the concepts of (iii) Corporate Social Responsibility and (iv) Participation, while analysing their challenges in a digital context.

Although using several papers to discuss these topics, a summary of the main articles used in the literature review can be seen in Annex 1.

2.1 Changes in Consumer Behaviour: From passive to active roles

Consumers' roles are changing: from isolated to connected, from unaware to informed, from passive to active (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In order to fully understand all the changes related to consumer behaviour, it is essential to look back a few decades in the marketing history.

Initially, marketing was merely related with the task of selling products, using a one-to-many communication (or in other words, mass media) and with exchanges between companies and consumers being exclusively transactional – This was called the Marketing 1.0 Era.

Afterwards, Marketing 2.0 began to focus on the consumers, which were better informed due to the emergence of information technologies. Though, in this era, it was still implied that the consumers were passive receivers of marketing campaigns.

Today, marketers need to understand that people are not just passive consumers, but "*human beings with minds, hearts and spirits*" (Kotler et al., 2010:4). Consumers are more knowledgeable, savvy, demanding and empowered, beginning to reject traditional advertising and commercial messages. They are no longer prepared to have their television entertainment interrupted by advertising (Fill & Hughes, 2007). There are countless sources of information "fighting" for attention, which makes people feeling struggled with information overload, making them desire for simplicity and meaning.

Organizations need to create a new way of thinking and acting to continue being effective and relevant in people's lives. More than ever, it is not only necessary to conquer the consumers' wallet but also their hearts. Consumers no longer consume products for their utility, but because of their symbolic meaning (Moutinho & Veloutsou, 2009).

The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey showed that Millennials feel that most businesses have no ambition beyond profit, and there are distinct differences in what they believe the purpose of business should be and what they perceive it to currently be.

Many companies are letting go consumers to the competition by not understanding them. To prevent this, they must focus on client's needs and seek long-lasting relationships, increase consumer positive experiences, undertake a constant bilateral dialogue approach, instead of a sporadic and unilateral communication (company to consumer).

Table 1 – Changes in Consumer Behaviour throughout Marketing eras

	Marketing 1.0 Product-centric Marketing	Marketing 2.0 Consumer-oriented Marketing	Marketing 3.0 Values-driven Marketing
Objective	Sell products	Satisfy and retain the consumers	Make the world a better place
Enabling forces	Industrial Revolution	Information technology	New wave technology
How companies see the market	Mass buyers with physical needs	Smarter consumer with mind and heart	Whole human with mind, heart, and spirit
Key marketing concept	Product development	Differentiation	Values
Company marketing guidelines	Product specification	Corporate and product positioning	Corporate mission, vision, and values
Value propositions	Functional	Functional and emotional	Functional, emotional, and spiritual
Interaction with consumers	One-to-many transaction	One-to-one relationship	Many-to-many collaboration

Source: Adapted from Kotler et al. (2010), *"Marketing 3.0 – From Products to Costumers to the Human Spirit"*

Nowadays, it is still possible to see Mass Marketers stuck in 4 P's concepts and other traditional concepts oriented only for profits, developing products or making advertisements with little or no meaning at all for people.

For example, persuasion is now regarded as just one of a number of tasks that an organization needs to accomplish through its communication activities. Providing information, listening informing and reminding customers are just some of the complexities associated with contemporary interpretations and usage of marketing communications. The emphasis has shifted from a "promoting to" to a "communicating with" focus (Fill & Hughes, 2007).

Authors Grönroos and Finne (2009) have also proposed a new communication model, named *relationship communication* that differs from other types of communication, in the sense that several factors influence meaning creation. Relationship communication is characterized by a situation where two parties take part in the communication process as active participants in the creation of meaning, as opposed to the traditional approach, which has focused on an active sender and has seen the receiver as a passive object in the communication process.

Therefore, brands need to understand new ways of communicating with their audiences, new ways of bringing meaningfulness to Marketing and of adding value to people's lives – this is the main challenge in the Marketing 3.0 Era.

2.2 Social Media

From Word-of-Mouth to World-of-mouth: as Kotler (2010) and Qualman (2009) both refer, people are no longer limited to what they can read about in the newspaper, watch on television, or hear from talking to a friend in a one-on-one conversation. Instead, they are now communicating information on a "many-to-many" global platform.

This is mainly because of the emergence of expressive social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) and collaborative social media (e.g. Wikipedia), which can bring several advantages such as being platforms that can lower costs, extend the reach of firms with its audience and improve communication effectiveness.

Even more important is the fact that this new form of communication highly differs from traditional platforms since "digital technology now enables not just two-way communications but interaction and dialogue with a range of audiences" which "*value the empowerment that interactive communications provide*" (Fill & Hughes, 2007:49).

With almost 4 billion internet users worldwide (~50% penetration), it is conclusive that society's interactive culture has been significantly influenced by technology. To some industry experts, we have entered the Golden Age of Digital, with unrivalled opportunities for consumers and

firms. In 2017, it is expected digital ad spending to surpass TV spending for the first time in history, in the U.S. (emarketer.com, 2016). The technological developments in the last decade have brought consumers and firms new capabilities that they could not have even dreamed of a few short years ago. Empowered consumers are meeting equally empowered firms: At one hand, consumers can choose to become as involved as they want with a brand, with their influence ranging from only posting comments and evaluations to actually determining the nature and direction of a brand. Firms, at the other hand, can also choose to become as involved as they wish with consumers, from simply hosting a brand web site to actively engaging and interacting with consumers in product and brand development (Keller et al., 2016).

Social media platforms have emerged as a dominant digital communication channel, being used at least by 75% of the adults who use the internet. And with near 100% penetration of mobile-cellular phones worldwide (ICT, 2014), social media are increasingly accessed and used at all times and places. Marketers are therefore adapting their strategies to reach increasingly networked consumers, and are placing more emphasis on competing for consumers' social media attention to drive customer engagement, spending billions of dollars each year on social media to establish and maintain a presence on Social Networking Sites.

Facebook, the biggest Social Networking Site to-date, has 1.94 billion monthly active users worldwide as of March 31, 2017 (Facebook.com, 2017). Thus, its importance is increasingly recognized by marketers, with the network also counting with the presence of 84% of the Fortune 500 companies (Barnes & Griswold, 2016).

Through social media, marketers can interact in two-way communications with existing and potential customers and gain rich, unmediated consumer insights faster than ever before (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Hudson et al., 2016).

Even though brands are aware of the increasingly importance of their presence on social media, many of them are lagging in adopting an online CSR strategy that raises awareness, therefore compromising stakeholders' engagement levels and, ultimately, the success in generating critical branding and consumer behaviour outcomes.

In the next sub-section, it will be made an overview of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the implementation of these activities in a digital context.

2.3 CSR in a digital context

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 1999) defined Corporate Social Responsibility as the "continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large."

Although previous findings regarding the financial implications of CSR might have been ambiguous, there is an increasingly acceptance about the positive outcomes these activities have in building brand equity, brand image (Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016), in improving reputation, trust and loyalty among consumers (Stanaland et al., 2011) and in the willingness consumers have to purchase and possibly even paying higher prices for products of firms with more CSR engagement (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013).

Additionally, with consumers' and other stakeholders' (e.g., employees, channel partners, regulators) increasing expectations that organizations should behave in socially responsible ways (Mishra & Modi, 2016), CSR has become an integral part of business practice over the last years, with many firms dedicating a section of their annual reports and corporate websites to CSR activities (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013).

Author Andreessen (2015) notes that the new generations seem to have social consciousness embedded in their DNA. They are united in wanting to do more than acquire material riches and measure success by their ability to transform the lives of others. Their question is not "What do I want to be when I grow up?" but "How will the world be different because I lived in it?".

In Euromonitor's Top 10 Global Consumer Trends for 2015, Consumer Trends Consultant Daphne Kasriel-Alexander states that consumption is increasingly being driven by the heart: consumers are making choices defined by their positive impact on the world and community.

Despite the strong interest in CSR activities, particularly in its outcomes in firms value and branding, there is yet little research and empirical studies regarding the effects of these activities in a social media context. The present research aims to fill this gap, by focusing on the branding outcomes that a CSR activity can generate while communicated in SNS and using participatory approaches.

Some researchers already found it questionable how stakeholder dialogue and engagement through corporate websites and CSR reports are accomplished and if they necessarily lead to greater stakeholder participation (Chaudhri, 2016). Thus, one of the research objectives is to examine if using a participatory CSR activity in social media rather than (or, at least, combined

with) the traditional approach of communicating CSR performance on firms´ annual reports can generate greater outcomes for brands, especially by testing if these activities can raise awareness, increase empowerment and participation levels.

Some authors (see Du et al., 2010) found two key challenges regarding CSR communication: the first one is the need for higher levels of awareness, as several researchers already found that a company can only benefit, enhance critical branding outcomes and even increase firm value through CSR activities if it has a high advertising intensity. These activities have low or negative impact on firm value for firms with low advertising intensity, sometimes with costs outweighing the benefits, as the lack of customer awareness about CSR activities represents a major limiting factor for their ability to respond to such activities (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013). Thus, Sen et al. (2006) argue that to reap the positive benefits of CSR, companies need to work harder at raising awareness levels.

Although not every firm might experience high levels of awareness (since not every organization can support high advertisement intensity or already have strong branding), this research responds to the call for further research by "*exploring channels available for dissemination of CSR activities*" (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013:1059), in particular, the social media channels, and by providing new research on "*the extent to which these new social and communicative arrangements are being realized by organizations and stakeholders and the attendant implications for CSR communication*", as it currently represents an "*evolving area of investigation*" (Chaudri, 2016:422).

Therefore, and since it is recommended that companies work on increasing CSR awareness levels, social media sites, such as Facebook, can be powerful channels not only due to its popularity and vast audience reach at a much lower cost, but also due to the opportunities consumers' word-of-mouth can create (Bhattacharya et al., 2010).

The second challenge is concerned with minimizing stakeholder scepticism. Stakeholders quickly become suspicious of the CSR motives when companies aggressively promote their CSR efforts (Bhattacharya et al., 2010). Since communicating CSR is a very delicate matter, it requires a certain sensitivity and balance, where organizations face the paradox of demonstrating social responsibility without communicating it blatantly, and being simultaneously credible, informative, and engaging (Chaudri, 2016). There's also no room for inconsistencies, as CSR is all about being selfless and charitable, the need for transparency and honesty is a must, since on one hand, these activities can have a backlash effect if stakeholders become suspicious and perceive predominantly extrinsic motives in companies' social initiatives (i.e. when the company is seen as attempting to increase its profits) and, on the other

hand, stronger attributions to genuine concern are likely to be associated with more positive reactions towards the company, both internally and behaviourally (Sen et al., 2006).

Kesavan et al. (2013) also found that social media is increasingly perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of CSR information than traditional media tools (e.g., TV and advertising).

2.4 Engagement in a social media context

In the last decade, the term "engagement" has been increasingly a subject of research in the marketing literature, largely since it is considered as a vital strategy for establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage, and increasingly being seen as a promising predictor of future business performance. Many authors have validated the potential benefits of engaged customers, evidencing these can exhibit enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, empowerment, connection, emotional bonding, trust, commitment (Brodie et al., 2011), and that can be crucial to the attainment of superior organizational performance outcomes, including sales growth, cost reductions, brand referrals, enhanced consumer contributions to collaborative product development processes, enhanced co-creative experiences, and superior profitability (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Although many scholars have different views about the engagement definition, there is a concordance that it refers to a psychologic/motivational state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand) in focal brand relationships and that comprises a customer's level of cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural investment in specific brand interactions (i.e. it is described as a multidimensional concept) (Brodie et al., 2011, Hollebeek et al., 2014; Bowden, 2009[1]).

The rationale underlying this concept is the same used in the present research, by recognizing contemporary consumers' active, rather than passive, roles and behaviours in specific brand-based processes. We enter in the age of participation and engagement, when people try to find not only personal and functional fulfilment, but also human spirit fulfilment in the products and services they choose (Kotler et al., 2010). There is a reduced emphasis on acquisition: consumers are bargain-saturated and crave the immaterial, emotional and spiritual. Firms must deliver product or service satisfaction, but must also strive in delivering a unique experience and get customers engaged and participative in the processes beyond of acquiring and/or use

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[1] Although Bowden (2009) views engagement as a psychologic process.

the product/service. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), an experience occurs when a company intentionally engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.

Although being a similar concept in the literature, "involvement", defined broadly as "*a goal-directed motivation that is indicative of the extent to which the decision is viewed as personally relevant to the customer*" (Bowden, 2009:68), while displaying the same psychologic/motivational characteristic as the "engagement" concept, lacks the notion of interactive consumer/brand relationships, especially in social media settings (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Thus, the relevance the term "engagement" has on the present research comes from the fact that it is a concept that aggregates the multiple ways "engagement subjects" (i.e. consumers and other stakeholders) behaviours beyond transactions and towards specific "engagement objects" (that might include brands, offerings, organizations, and organizational activities) may influence firms (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Additionally, "*the interactive capabilities of social media provide a conceptual parallel to the interactively generated nature underlying the 'engagement' concept*", since *"by providing access to online content and facilitating communication, social media may connect consumers and organizations, thus fostering consumer 'engagement'"* (Hollebeek et al., 2014:155).

However, due to engagement being a relatively recent concept in the scholarly literature, authors have come with multiple scales to measure the same concept, thus difficultying the generalization of one scale that captures all of the consumers' engagement-related dynamics (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

Given the limited understanding of the concept and its measurement to date, the present research will focus in measuring participation, which is considered to be the behavioural dimension and a proxy for engagement.

Although representing just one dimension of the engagement concept, participation is considered to be an important antecedent in the development of engagement (Brodie et al., 2011), and may only occur by an agent providing the possibility for a dynamic and interactive experience.

Therefore, this thesis expects to contribute for the development of the research on the engagement concept by measuring one of its important antecedents.

In the next sub-sections, it will be discussed some major opportunities regarding the practice of the online participatory CSR activities.

2.4.1 Co-creation

Co-creation is another form of bringing meaningfulness to Marketing. Nowadays, the roles of producers, sellers, buyers and consumers are blurring (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995), companies must escape the firm-centric view of the past and seek to co-create value with customers through a focus on personalized interactions between the consumer and the company (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). They should try to invite consumers and potential consumers to participate in the development of products and communications. Authors Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) even state that a firm cannot create anything of value without the engagement of individuals.

Table 2 – Evolving Relationships between Firms and Consumers

From	To
▪ One-way	▪ Two-way
▪ Firm to consumer	▪ Consumer to firm
▪ Controlled by firm	▪ Consumer to consumer
▪ Consumers are "prey"	▪ Consumers can "hunt"
▪ Choice = buy/not buy	▪ Consumer wants to/can impose his view of choice
▪ Firm segments and targets consumers; consumers must "fit into" firm's offerings	▪ Consumer wants to/is being empowered to co-construct a *personalized experience* around herself, with firm's experience environment

Source: Adapted from Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004), *"The Future of Competition: Co-Creating Unique Value With Customers"*

According to Gilbreath (2009), people are looking for richer experiences and deeper social connections, ways to improve themselves and to make a positive impact on the world. Thus, co-creation is gaining traction as a promising strategy to enhance consumers' engagement with a brand.

Authors Sheth & Parvatiyar (1995) stated that market participants can jointly participate in design, development, production and consummation of goods and services, in activities such as

joint planning, co-production, co-marketing, co-branding, etc., where the parties in the relationship bring their resources together for creating a greater market value. However, this research considers that the co-creative element used in the development of products and services can also be added to socially responsible activities, even when they are not tied to a product or service purchase.

Despite being put into practice by public entities, Participatory Budgeting (PB) represents an example of such co-created activities. The PB is a governmental instrument that entrusts citizens the decisions regarding how to spend a part of the municipal budget, allowing citizens to participate in the discussion and proposal phase and to vote in the finalist projects. On the one hand, citizens can submit proposals and, on the other hand, they are able to monitor the final outcome of the process by voting.

A successful case of these initiatives is the Cascais Participatory Budgeting, which in 2016, has revealed to be the most successful PB in Portugal, and the second in Europe, having registered 58,567 votes (about 28% of the city population), being the most voted edition ever in the country.

Since the launch of the yearly initiative, the number of voters rose from 6,903 in 2011 to 58,677 in the last year, even surpassing the number of voters who took part in the traditional voting system for the local elections.

Due to the proven success of the initiative, the Cascais Town Hall has inclusively decided to extend their reach by implement a pilot test for a Youth Participatory Budgeting, by promoting for the first time an experience of PB in four groups of schools of the county, in which students can decide what to do with a part of the municipal budget and participate with project ideas for their schools and the surrounding community.

Although being a different typology of participative process, the PB has the same ideology of digitally co-created CSR activities, where an organization enables its stakeholders (in this case, the city habitants), to make decisions regarding a social topic and reach them using new communication channels (although not using the Internet, public entities allow participation by free SMS).

By using a two-way approach and allowing citizens to be one of the protagonists in this process, the levels of engagement are considerably high, with the number of voters in 2016 corresponding to almost 30% of the total residents.

Thus, consumers and organizations can go beyond co-creating just goods or services and cooperate in the creation of new strategies, experiences, advertising campaigns and even CSR activities.

Authors Jaakkola & Alexander (2014) have empirically shown that customers are motivated to engage in non-transactional behaviours in online contexts because they expect benefits such as enhanced knowledge and reputation, social benefits, and economic benefits such as cost savings. They also found that the individuals' sense of ownership of the focal firm's offering and empowerment are both key drivers of engagement, thus suggesting the need to transfer part of the company's power to the consumer.

As a consequence, some brands are starting to use digital platforms to co-create with their audiences. In a recent study, Kull and Heath (2016), focused in brands that co-create social responsibility initiatives, showing that empowering and engaging consumers can enhance such critical marketing outcomes as brand attachment, brand attitude and purchase intention. They studied a co-creative element that can be added to CSR, which lets consumers determine the charity or cause to which the company will make a donation. Inversely to prior studies that found that consumers induced to feel empowered are more likely to switch brands, they also showed that when the power-sharing source is the brand itself, the opposite occurs, with consumer–brand ties growing stronger in the process.

Firms can also invite consumers to participate in their CSR activities by using call-to-actions, i.e. encouraging consumers to take action. Although the term may be generally related to a purchase behaviour (e.g. "buy now"), in the present research it will be strictly related to extra-purchase roles, where individuals are prompted to participate in brands' CSR actions without having to spend any money.

Thus, this study will also respond to Kull and Heath (2016) call for further research, by exploring if their findings regarding co-creative CSR are generalizable to other forms of corporate philanthropy that are not tied to a product purchase or other consumer generated, revenue-providing transactions. For that matter, it is going to be used the illustrative example of Continente, one of the largest Portuguese retailers, to discuss how awareness, interactivity, empowerment and participation levels can be strongly created and fostered by online participatory CSR activities.

Through a recent partnership between Continente and Animalife (a Portuguese Retailer and a Portuguese NGO, respectively) it was implemented, perhaps, the most successful case of online co-created CSR initiative in Portugal.

The initiative was very simple: it consisted in helping low-income families and homeless people to provide food for their animals, by making a donation of 100 grams of feed for each Facebook user that participated in the cause, just by giving a "Like" to the Continente's brand page.

Below, it is presented the text and illustration used in Continente's post on Facebook, on May 6, 2016:

"Through Missão Continente, we will donate to "Animalife - Creating happy stories" 100g of feed for every new fan on the Continente's page on Facebook. Contributing is simple! Just do like on the page until May 11. Tell all your friends. The more fans we get, the more animals we can help!"

Figure 1 – Continente's CSR post on Facebook

Source: Continente Facebook brand page

It was with this message, posted on its Facebook page last year, that Continente registered more than 86,000 interactions (amaempresarial.pt, 2016), with more than 71,000 likes, leading the top 10 ranking of "likes" of Portuguese national brands' pages on Facebook (excludes media brands such as newspapers, Televisions, radios, etc.) between the 2nd and 15th of May 2016 (Marktest, 2016).

Figure 2 – "Likes" on Facebook brand pages' posts, from 2 to 15 of May, 2016:

Continente	71453
MEO	29523
NOS	28307
Licor Beirão	23739
Sagres	15342
Super Bock	14052
WTF	11358
Millennium bcp	8213
Merrell	7688
Worten	7503
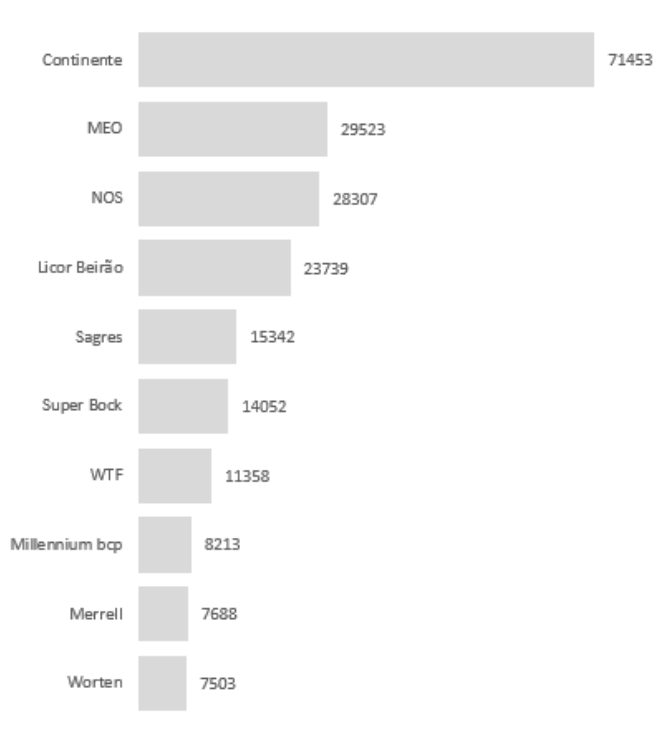
Source: Marktest, Social Media Explorer (Data obtained at 15:00h, 16 May)

Socialbakers' May 2016 report on the performance of brands in social networks, in Portugal, gives Continente the first place in terms of the highest level of growth on Facebook (+ 33,175 fans), greatly influenced by the presented participatory CSR activity.

Those figures are even more significant as they correspond to the biweekly maximum recorded since Marktest regularly monitors this indicator (2013).

But what dynamics might have created such buzz? And can this type of activities be a better strategy for companies to leverage Corporate Social Responsibility than the traditional approach of communicating them through dedicated sections in annual reports and websites?

The following chapters will be dedicated to exploring these questions, mainly by analysing the potential for raising awareness, increasing empowerment and participation levels.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design used in this thesis, including testing hypotheses, scaling and measuring instruments, data collection and data analysis techniques used in order to scientifically sustain the empirical research.

Therefore, it will be divided in (i) Research Paradigm/Objectives; (ii) testing Hypothesis; (iii) Data collection procedures; and (iv) Design and measures.

3.1 Research Paradigm/ Objectives

Based on the review of literature, the research was undertaken to assess the potential of online co-creative CSR initiatives in generating awareness and on increasing stakeholders' participation.

More specifically, the present research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To compare traditional CSR communication versus online participatory CSR activities, and their awareness potential;
2. To capture the branding outcomes of using participatory CSR approaches in digital media, especially by understanding if they increase individuals' empowerment and participation levels.

This research will examine if companies that engage stakeholders (through co-creation and call-to-actions) to be active participants in their online CSR activities can be more effective in increasing interactivity, empowerment and, therefore, increasing participation levels, rather than companies who use the conventional design and communication of these activities (e.g. dedicated sections in annual reports and websites), where the stakeholder has no participation in the process and is merely taken as a passive agent.

The interactivity and the freedom of cause choice are believed in this study to be two mechanisms that will play an important role in generating more empowered stakeholders, with increased propensity for participating in co-created CSR initiatives.

This research will also analyse if the Social Media Sites (with a special focus on Facebook) can overcome one of the main obstacles regarding CSR activities, i.e., raising stakeholders' awareness levels on these activities.

3.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been defined according to the objectives mentioned above:

H1: Online co-created CSR activities have greater potential for raising awareness than the traditional communication channels.

H2: Online participatory CSR activities can increase consumers' empowerment levels.

3.3 Data collection procedures

The data collection procedure selected for the following thesis was the online questionnaire.

Since the research paradigm in the following thesis is specially linked to the online channel and especially the Social Networking Sites, the online questionnaire revealed to be the most logical procedure for collecting relevant data for the study.

This procedure comprised two stages: for the first stage, it was prepared a pre-test of the questionnaire, which was the pillar for the second and main stage: the online questionnaire.

Pre-testing is a method to evaluate in advance if a questionnaire causes misunderstandings, ambiguities, or other difficulties with instrument items to respondents, helping researchers minimizing future errors. During the pre-test stage, a total of 10 people were selected to be monitored while responding to the first draft of the questionnaire. This stage provided important insights about each one of the questions previously elaborated, allowing for reviewing and refining them, as well as adding more questions that revealed to be relevant for the study.

In order to equally approach the international market, the scalability of the online questionnaires was taken into account and two versions were created for the purpose: one in Portuguese and one in English.

As for the second stage, the online questionnaire was launched in social networks - Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn - and in an international forum - Reddit -, from 18th of June of 2016 to 01th of August of 2016.

3.4 Design and Measures

In total, the questionnaire was composed of 28 questions, separated into three sections (see Annex 2).

After a brief introduction that included the research purpose and theme, the estimated time of completion of the questionnaire and the statement for the guarantee of anonymity, the first section was composed by 14 questions that measured social networking usage, current CSR awareness levels, general use of the traditional CSR communication channels, current level of control felt by respondents towards CSR activities, the empowerment felt after companies adding cause choice freedom and respondents' attitudes towards the effectiveness and outcomes of participatory CSR initiatives.

The second section of the questionnaire consisted in 10 questions regarding a real CSR initiative, implemented in March 2016, by one of the biggest Portuguese retailers - Continente.

After a brief contextualization, the questions measured activity recall rate, participation rate, reasons to (or not to) participate, Word-of-Mouth (WoM) dissemination rate (or propensity), perception of brand image after the initiative and attitudes towards online co-created CSR initiatives (acceptance levels).

According to Bradley (2013), the problem of knowledge and recall is a complex one and the process by which information is remembered has implications for researchers. Therefore, and since the validity of responses was greatly dependent of the example's recall, it was used a stimulus to assist respondents when being interviewed: for this purpose, an image was placed in the second section of the questionnaire to facilitate recall, as the action there presented had already taken place 1 year ago at the time the questionnaire was launched (see Annex 2). According to the same author, there is evidence that the validity of respondents' judgement increases with the realism of pictorial representations.

Due to the use of filters, this section had also different question routes for each participant, based in its answers (see flow chart for section II in Annex 3).

In order to better understand the WoM dynamics in the veridical participatory CSR activity, it was also performed a Sentiment Analysis (also known as Opinion Mining). A manual inspection to the users commentaries in Continente's Facebook post was carried out, which started by removing or correcting lexical errors, by dividing the comments in three categories (positive, neutral and negative), according to the emotions exhibited by users and finally, by

counting the most used words or expressions that were able of revealing users' view or emotions towards the initiative.

The third and last section contained 4 questions regarding socio-demographic measures, namely: nationality, age, gender and educational level.

Table 3 – Structure of the questionnaire and topics covered

Structure of the questionnaire	Topics covered
Introduction	Brief description of: ▪ The purpose of the questionnaire; ▪ The estimated time of completion (5 minutes); ▪ The guarantee of anonymity of personal data.
Section I: Participatory Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Facebook	▪ Use of Social Networks; ▪ Current CSR initiatives awareness levels; ▪ Comparison between traditional vs participatory CSR initiatives; ▪ Branding outcomes of participatory CSR initiatives in digital media; ▪ Current control and empowerment levels towards CSR actions vs control and empowerment perceptions towards co-created CSR initiatives; ▪ WoM dissemination propensity.
Section II: Participatory Social Responsibility: A Continente initiative (Portuguese retailer) on Facebook	▪ Contextualization; ▪ Recalling rate; ▪ Participation rate; ▪ Reasons to or not to participate; ▪ WoM dissemination rate and propensity; ▪ Brand image perception after initiative; ▪ Measure attitudes towards online co-created CSR initiatives (acceptance levels)
Section III: Socio-Demographic Characterization	▪ Nationality ▪ Age ▪ Gender ▪ Education level

Source: Author's elaboration

Regarding the Likert-type questions, it was used a 10-point scale on the majority of these questions, in order to get more accurate and detailed perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. In

all of these questions, it was also used semantic differential scales, which are intended to measure the "*'semantic space' of interpersonal experience and to help respondents identifying the 'position' of their answers on a line or space between two descriptions*" (Bradley, 2013: 203).

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 Sample characterization

In total, 322 valid responses were collected, coded and analysed using exploratory statistical techniques with IBM SPSS Statistics 23. A summary of the socio-demographics is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 – Sample socio-demographic characteristics

		Mean	n	%
Sample Size			322	100
Age		28		
Age Group	16-24		190	59.0
	25-32		67	20.8
	33-40		32	9.9
	More than 40		33	10.2
Gender	Male		118	36.6
	Female		204	63.4
Education	Basic Education		7	2.5
	High School		12	4.3
	Bachelor		165	59.4
	Master		93	33.5
	PhD		1	.4
Country	Portugal		265	82.3
	Other Countries		57	17.7

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

Respondent ages ranged from 16 to 59 years old, with a mean of 28 years old. The majority of the respondents were females (63.4%), had between 16 and 24 years old (59.0%), a bachelor degree (59.4%) and had a Portuguese nationality (82.3%). Additional details concerning the sample characteristics are presented in Annex 4.

4.2 Characterizing social media behaviours

In order to measure social media use, respondents were questioned about their most used Social Networking Sites. This question also served to assess the sample fit, as the SNS considered in this research was Facebook.

Regarding the use of SNS, the sample shows coherence with the facts stated on the literature review regarding social media. First of all, the majority of respondents uses Facebook on a daily basis (84%), with Instagram also having a significant weight (64%) among the most used Social Networking Sites (see Table 5), being two promising social networks for brands to be present and to communicate their CSR activities.

Table 5 – Use of Social Networking Sites

What social networks do you use most often?

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Occasionally		Never		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Facebook	84%	271	6%	19	1%	2	4%	12	6%	18	100%	322
Instagram	64%	193	9%	27	2%	6	6%	19	19%	57	100%	302
Twitter	10%	28	4%	11	3%	7	12%	34	71%	195	100%	275
LinkedIn	9%	25	30%	86	13%	38	16%	45	31%	88	100%	282
Google+	8%	22	8%	24	2%	6	12%	35	70%	202	100%	289
Other	12%	28	6%	15	0%	1	10%	24	71%	163	100%	231

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

Secondly, it becomes clear that the presence of companies in social networks is a must: only a small group of respondents (11.4%) does not follow any brand on their Social Network accounts (see Figure 3), as opposed to the group that claims to follow many brands (more than 10).

Thus, SNS present many opportunities for brands to guarantee that they remain connected to their consumers and other stakeholders.
The present study confirms the continued growth in the presence of consumers on social networks, with many of them following several brands.
Annex 5 gives more detailed information on the brand following patterns (ungrouped categories).

Figure 3 – Nº of brands followed
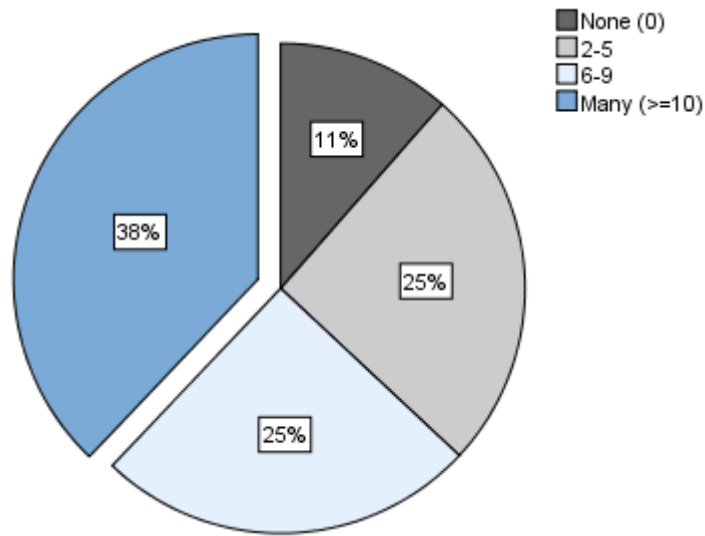
Source: Author's elaboration

Even for those who do not follow as many brands, for example, companies can still use SNS tools such as targeted posts (i.e. promoted posts that appear in target users' feed), to ensure their awareness and relevance levels remains significant, especially when companies are seeking for users with specific interests.

However, users do not want to be flooded with information or commercials on social networks, instead, they are looking for social interaction. Organizations need to go beyond the traditional approach of posting updates on their websites, launching press releases or using annual reports to communicate social responsibility and embrace the latest innovations, such as uploading photos, videos, games or mobile applications that actually enable interactivity and engage stakeholders.

Therefore, in this digitalized era, where companies and individuals have new opportunities and capabilities of communicating and interacting with each other, brands and brand building must now be seen as a coming together of capabilities, engagements, and experiences (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016).

4.3 Characterizing awareness towards CSR initiatives

In order to characterize consumers' awareness towards the topic of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, respondents were firstly asked if they considered themselves to be informed about these initiatives (see questions in Annex 2).

After analysing the distribution of the 322 responses by the 28 questions, it was possible to conclude that, currently, CSR practices have a very low awareness among consumers. Below, Table 6 depicts the distribution of answers according to the number of initiatives people are generally aware of, where it is clear to see that the majority of the respondents (92.2%) affirmed to have little or no awareness at all for CSR initiatives.

Table 6 – Current CSR awareness levels

|	Uninformed (0 initiatives)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Well Informed (+10 initiatives)	Total
N	136	45	62	23	31	6	8	5	4	2	322
%	42	14	19	7	10	2	2	2	1	1	100
Cumulative %	42	56	75	83	92	94	97	98	99	100	

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

There is already strong evidence that the current "state of affairs" does not present the ideal conditions for developing CSR initiatives' awareness. Consequently, by failing to guarantee one of the two key challenges for CSR communication (see Du et al., 2010) companies might as well be compromising their activities success.

Continuing to assess current awareness levels for brands CSR activities, respondents were also questioned about their usage of the traditional CSR communication channels: companies' annual reports and websites. As expected, the majority of the respondents (84%) rarely make use of corporate websites to learn more about any CSR actions, and it is practically null the number of people who use annual reports for this matter.

Thus, one potential cause for this "bottleneck" is that the channels generally used to inform shareholders about these initiatives have a very low adherence by the general public, as it can be seen in Figure 4 (and detailed in Annex 6).

Figure 4 – Use of Corporate Websites (left) and use of Annual Reports (right)
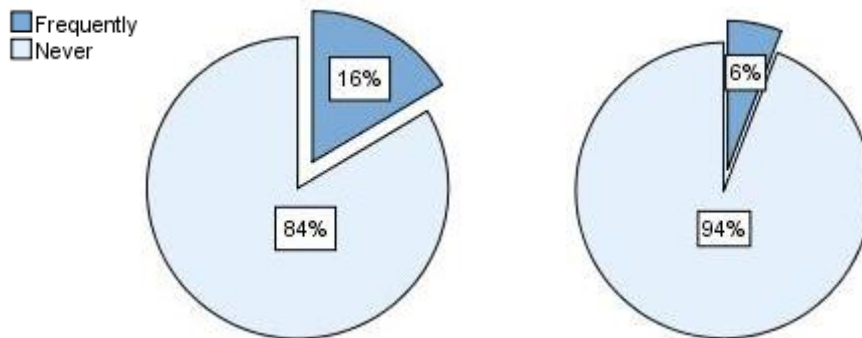
Source: Author's elaboration

To strengthen this finding, respondents' attitudes towards new communication channels were also measured.

Firstly, by asking if social networking sites could or not be a more effective way of communicating CSR initiatives than other traditional communication channels. The results left no doubts: the majority (95.3%) believes social networking to be a better approach for communicating CSR activities.

Secondly, by asking if they consider that Facebook has the potential to raise awareness about CSR activities. Again, the vast majority (95.0%) believes that Facebook brings higher awareness for these initiatives (see Annexes 7 and 8).

Moreover, an Independent Samples t-Test was performed, which tested if the mean CSR awareness for the group of respondents who follow few or no brands at all in social media is statistically different from the group of respondents that follow several brands.

Thus, in order to perform this test, the independent continuous variable was split in low and high values (see Annex 9), using the analytical technique called median split (Iacobucci et al., 2015). However, as the median of the responses was 8 (in a scale from 1 to 10), the researcher found it would be very debatable to consider a person aware of six to eight CSR activities of having low CSR awareness. Consequently, the split values were adjusted to 6 (with the scale used by respondents being split equally in half) and a new t-Test was performed.

To conduct the t-test, one of the first steps was also to determine the homogeneity of variance between samples by using the Levene Test, a prerequisite that shows how to interpret the results from the t-Test.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis of the t-Test:

$$H_0: \sigma_1 = \sigma_2$$

$$H_a: \sigma_1 \neq \sigma_2$$

In the Levene Test, if the value of the significance is lower than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not met, we must use the data results from the line "Equal variances not assumed".

After testing the samples homogeneity of variances, the independent t-test can finally be conducted, where the null hypothesis is shown below:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_a: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 7 – Independent Samples t-Test

Group Statistics

	N° of brands followed	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CSR awareness	Many brands	203	2,74	2,096	,147
	Few Brands	119	2,45	1,716	,157

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
CSR awareness	Equal variances assumed	2,33	,128	1,3	320	,196	,294	,227	-,153	,740
	Equal variances not assumed			1,4	287	,174	,294	,215	-,130	,717

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

Through Levene Test, it is possible to see that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met, as p-value of $0.128 > \alpha = 0.05$, and therefore the first line of the results should be used.

Thus, as the t-test result shows (p-value= $0.196 > \alpha = 0.05$), there is no statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting there is no significant mean difference in the CSR awareness levels between the group of respondents who follow few or no brands ($\bar{x}=2.45$, $\sigma=1.716$) and the group that follow several brands ($\bar{x}=2.74$, $\sigma=2.096$) in social media.

Although one might think that individuals who follow more brand pages in social media have a necessarily higher CSR awareness than those who don't follow as many brands (or none at all), results surprisingly revealed that this premise does not verify in the actual context, as both groups revealed to have low levels of CSR awareness. The results in this finding may as well imply that social media remains yet unexplored as a CSR communication channel by organizations.

Therefore, all the above tests give a **strong evidence to support H1**: Online co-created CSR activities have greater potential for raising awareness than the traditional communication channels.

Considering also that the traditional communicating channels are failing to provide more awareness to CSR activities, and that respondents' perceive social media as a better communication forum, brand managers need to devise different strategies for the optimal communication of CSR initiatives, which have higher potential to result not only in improved attitudes and brand image, but also in the increased intent of stakeholders to commit personal resources (e.g., money, time, etc.) to the benefit of the company, in a near future.

4.4 Participatory CSR: Branding outcomes

Regarding the branding outcomes of participatory CSR initiatives, the results of the study show that the majority of respondents consider that these activities lead to increased awareness ($\bar{x}$=4.30), public engagement ($\bar{x}$=4.24), brand attachment ($\bar{x}$=4.19), trust ($\bar{x}$=3.86), purchase intention ($\bar{x}$=3.62) and, also improving brand image ($\bar{x}$=4.27), as it can be seen in figure 5. Moreover, with an average of 2.80 points, respondents do not agree that these activities increase brands' costs (more detailed information on Annex 10).

Figure 5 – Participatory CSR branding outcomes
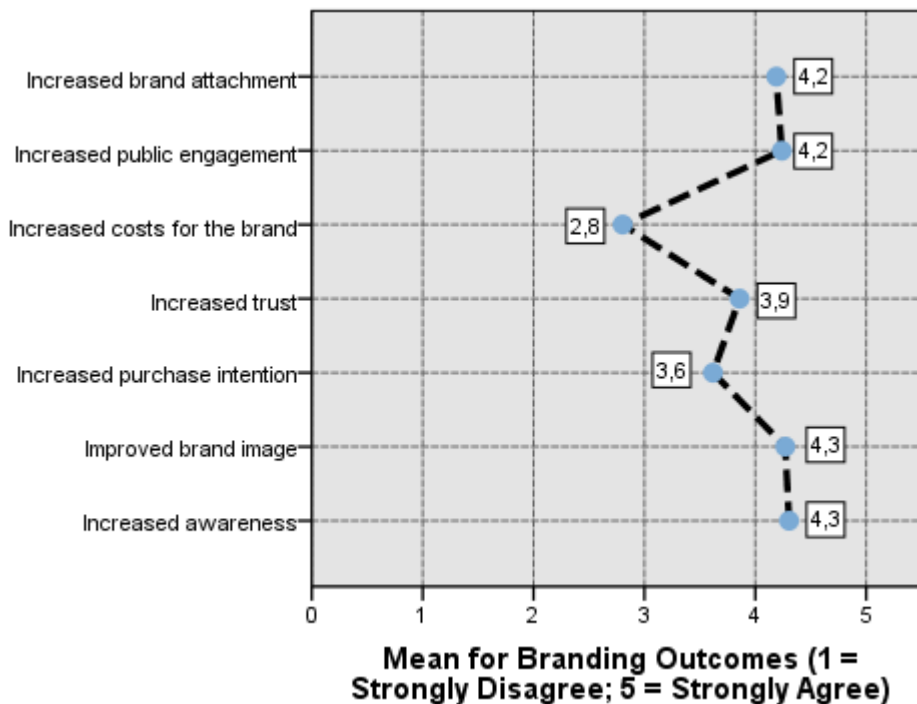
Source: Author's elaboration

Thus, respondents consider that co-created CSR activities enhance several crucial marketing outcomes, and that they do not necessarily translate in increased costs for brands. In fact, if brands carefully plan their budget, by estimating costs, defining timings and setting a maximum number of participants or the value to allocate for the initiative (for example), they can reduce the risks of spending more money and other resources than they are able to.

As for the use of co-creation to another extent beyond the "mere" joint participation between company-consumer on a product or a service for own consumption, respondents were also asked if they would feel emotionally more connected to a brand after both had worked together to solve a social issue.

As many authors consider that the best relationships with customers are affective or emotional in nature, even transcending economic exchange (Parvatiyar and Sheth, 1995; Bowden, 2009; Kotler, 2010), it seemed relevant to understand if these activities can nurture these bonds between consumers and companies.

The results were convincing, as the vast majority (93.48%) believes to be more emotionally connected to a brand after both have worked together to solve a social issue (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6 – Would you consider yourself more emotionally connected to a brand after both have worked together to solve a social issue?
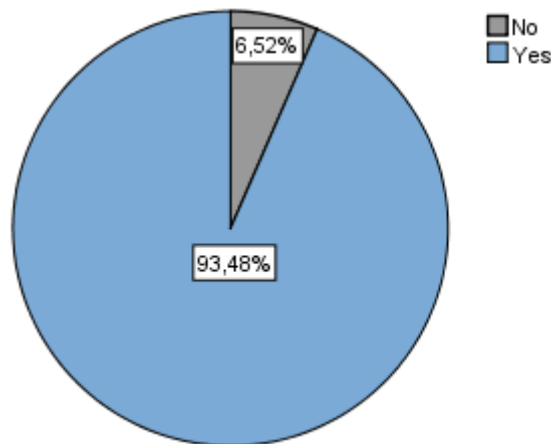
Source: Author's elaboration

Although co-created activities by brands and consumers could come in different arrangements, including the co-creation of physical goods or experiences, relational ties can be especially strengthened when the two parties come together to share a more emotional experience of helping others and solving social causes.

Empowerment might also be fostered by engaging stakeholders to participate in strategic management decisions and giving them a more active role, thus enhancing their perceptions of personal responsibility in helping to solve a social issue.

4.5 Effect of adding cause-choice on empowerment

To test for **H2:** "Online CSR participatory activities can increase consumers empowerment levels", it was performed a matched-pairs T-Test, as presented below (Table 8), in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the mean difference between the variables "current degree of control" respondents currently feel regarding CSR initiatives and the "level of empowerment after adding cause-choice" is significantly different from zero.

Below, the hypothesis are presented:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_a: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 8 – Matched-pairs T-Test (current level of control vs empowerment after adding cause-choice)

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Empowerment after adding freedom of choice - Current level of control	3,258	2,625	,146	2,970	3,546	22,271	321	,000

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

As the test result shows (p-value= 0.001 < α= 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning there is a statistically significant average difference between the current level of control ($\bar{x}$=3.46, σ=2.03) and the empowerment one feels after adding cause-choice to CSR initiatives ($\bar{x}$=6.72, σ=2.1), consequently **supporting H2** and suggesting that, currently, consumers' feel very low control about CSR decisions and outcomes, resulting from their passive role in the process.

The traditional approach of implementing and communicating CSR does not provide an opportunity for an interactive experience neither gives the freedom for individuals choosing the cause to which the organization is donating to.

As expected, the increasingly consumers' demand for control is not being properly addressed by the conventional CSR channels of communication, which does not have the capabilities to increase consumers' perceptions of being in control of an organization meaningful decision.

Below, in Figure 7, it is presented a graph that helps visualizing the mean differences (see Annex 11 and 12 for the test preparations and more detailed data).

Figure 7 – Changes in Empowerment after adding cause choice
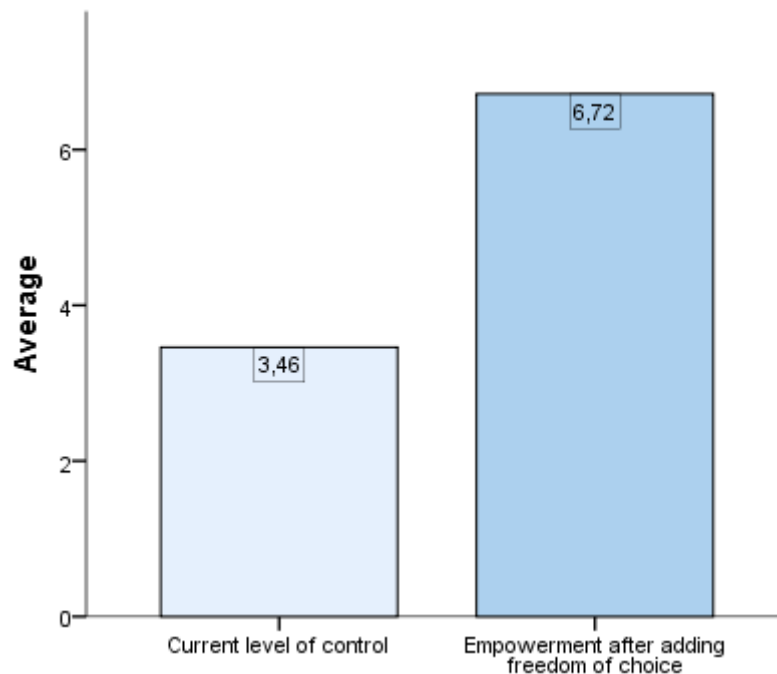
Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

Thus, companies should make efforts in giving their public more freedom to participate and to choose the charitable cause to which the company is donating. In doing so, consumers become empowered by having a more significant role and contributing actively to solve a social issue, making CSR activities more likely to be effective.

Companies can share control in many ways. For example, as Kull & Heath (2016) observe, shared consumer control ranges from being restricted (i.e., select a cause from a list whose length may vary) to unrestricted (i.e., choose any cause). The same authors argued that increasing decision freedom across these conditions also significantly enhance empowerment and engagement.

The veridical CSR activity used in this thesis was one example of how companies can differentiate and innovate in this field. Although the activity was a proven success and allowed unrestricted participation (the only minor restriction to the campaign was the timeframe of one week), it did not gave freedom to choose the charitable cause, which was predefined by Continente and Animalife.

Nevertheless, the fact that this activity is inserted in one end of the continuum of shared control did not prevent the action from having high levels of participation and interactivity, meaning there is still a huge potential in these activities, even when brands simply introduce the participative element.

Regarding the traditional CSR approach, there is no shared control as the brand alone determines the donation recipient, while the suggested two-way CSR approach presents an opportunity not only for providing help to a specific charity but also for the act of determining the cause and being part of the donation process.

4.6 Real participatory CSR activity

Regarding the second main section of the questionnaire - the example of a real participatory CSR initiative -, respondents were initially asked if they recalled Continente online CSR activity. As expected for an activity occurring in a Portuguese retailer Facebook page, only a small fraction of the foreign respondents (4%) were able to recall it. Therefore, and confirmed this expectation, only the Portuguese answers were considered for this question.

Results showed that about 4 in 10 respondents were able to recall the activity, which can be considered a very good result, especially taking into account that the action had already occurred 1 year ago at the time the questionnaire was launched.

Table 9 – Activity Recall

			Activity Recall		Total
			No	Yes	
Country	Portugal	Count	167	98	265
		% within Country	63%	37%	100%
	Other Countries	Count	55	2	57
		% within Country	96%	4%	100%
Total		Count	222	100	322
		% within Country	69%	31%	100%

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

Regarding those who were initially aware of the initiative (n=100), only 28% (n=28) chose not to participate. Even those who were not initially aware of the initiative (n=222) showed to be highly predisposed to participate ($\bar{x}$=7.54), therefore demonstrating the engagement potential of online participatory CSR (see Annex 13).

Table 10 – Participation

			Participation		Total
			No	Yes	
Country	Portugal	Count	28	70	98
		% within Country	29%	71%	100%
	Other Countries	Count	0	2	2
		% within Country	0%	100%	100%
Total		Count	28	72	100
		% within Country	28%	72%	100%

Source: Author's elaboration (SPSS Output)

As for the reasons to participate, the majority of the participants answered that the relevance (76.4%) and the ease of participation (73.6%) were the most decisive characteristics among all the presented factors that could explain their involvement in the initiative, as it can be seen in figure 8. Regarding those who chose not to participate, the factor that weighted the most was also "relevance" (50.0%), followed by "other" reasons (28.6%) and lack of trust (21.4%) (see Annex 14 and Annex 15 for more detailed info).

Figure 8 – Reasons to participate
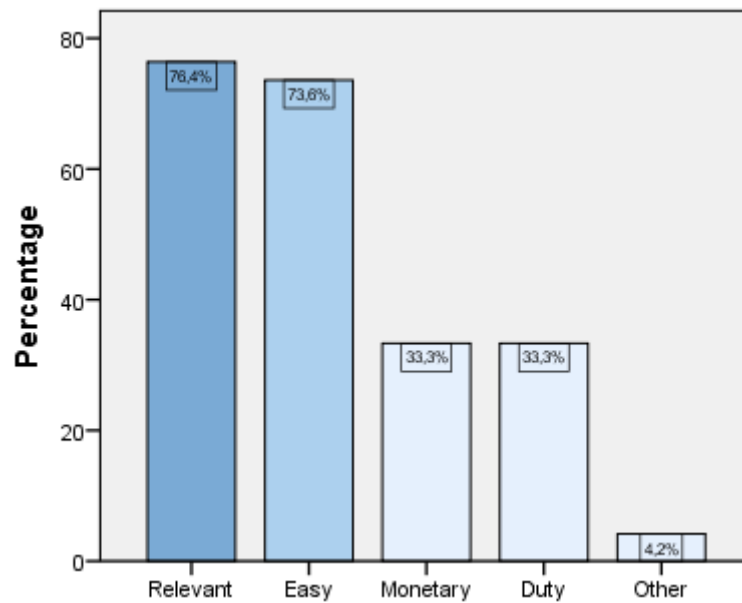
Source: Author's elaboration

Another relevant finding comes with the Word-of-Mouth potential these activities yield: Of the total of respondents who were initially aware of the initiative (n=100), more than half (56.0%) shared or referred this activity to any of their friends or contacts, therefore perpetuating the "awareness effect" that social media adds to these initiatives (see Annex 16).

Even those who were not aware of the initiative (n=222) considered to be predisposed ($\bar{x}$ =6,35) to disseminate the initiative (e.g. by sharing the post, talking to friends, etc.) if they had been aware of it (Annex 17).

In order to deepen understand these WoM dynamics, the feedback comments in the initiative's post (see Annex 18) were also examined through sentiment analysis (sometimes also called opinion mining). There are mainly two approaches for this analysis: the automated approach, which can analyse mass quantities of text at a rapid pace, and the manual (or human) approach,

which is inherently more accurate but at the costs of being more time-consuming in mass text analysis.

In this study, the manual approach was used for the sentiment analysis. This approach requires the intervention of a human element which must dissect, for example, abbreviations, sarcasm, emoticons or slang, in order to determine the true expressed sentiment.

The Continente's Facebook post that was subject to be analysed in this study (see Annex 19) counted with more than 600 commentaries and in order to attain a general view of the character of attitudes and reactions towards the initiative, the first 50 more relevant commentaries in the post (i.e. the most liked/relevant commentaries that appear in first place) were considered for the analysis, about 8% of the total number of commentaries.

Then, the manual inspection was carried out: first, by removing or correcting lexical errors; second, by dividing the comments in three categories (positive, neutral and negative), according to the emotions exhibited by users; and lastly, by counting the most used words or expressions that were able of revealing users' view or emotions towards the initiative.

Below, it is presented a summary of the sentiment analysis, which counts the number of times each emotion was displayed in the sample of 50 commentaries and the number of times each keyword and/or expression was reflected in users' feedback.

Table 11 – Sentiment Analysis Summary

| **Emotion:**	**Nº of commentaries**	**Keywords and Expressions used:**
Positive (+)	50	**Praising** the idea (18); **"Congratulations"** (17); "**Thank you**" (17); - Intention or appealing to **"Share/Participate"** (17); - Wishing **"Success"** (7).
Neutral (=)	0	-
Negative (-)	0	-

Source: Author's elaboration

There was a clear satisfaction and advocacy with the Continente's initiative, as illustrated by the first three commentaries in the post, which are examples of these WoM dynamics and of the positive emotions towards this participatory CSR approach:

a. "*I hope it is a successful project because the animals deserve all our love and our solidarity. If it really is a true campaign, which I believe, well done.*"
b. "*Very well! Congratulations Continente for this wonderful cause* […] *thanks for helping* […]"
c. "*We have to share, we have to help! We cannot ignore this noble cause. Please friends, you only need to share!! Thank you.*"

The high propensity for participation and WoM dissemination (by sharing or referring to a friend) presented above are factors that strongly suggest that online co-created CSR initiatives can increase stakeholders' participation.

Respondents were also asked what were their perceptions about the impact this activity had on Continente brand image, in a scale from 1=Very Negative to 10=Very positive. For purpose of analysis, this variable was grouped into 5 different evaluations. Through figure 9, it is possible to see that the vast majority (88.8%) considered that the activity had, at least, a positive outcome in the brand's image (see Annex 20 for ungrouped categories).

Figure 9 – Perception of the impact of Continente CSR initiative on its brand image
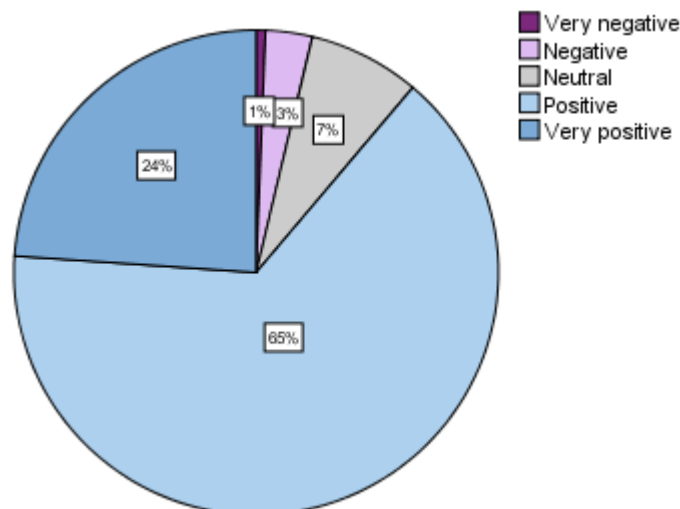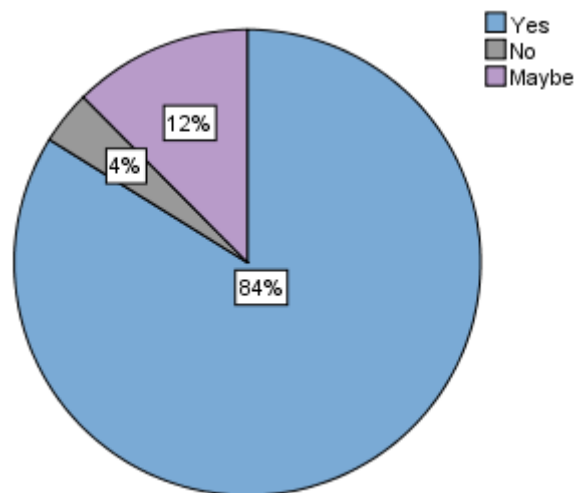

Source: Author's elaboration

In the last 2 questions of this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked (1) if in a co-creation perspective, where each person can contribute and help to get the word out, this type of initiatives could be more beneficial to society in general than if companies only acted by themselves; and (2) if other brands should have more participatory approaches to Social Responsibility, similar to the one the Continent has practiced.

For the first one, the vast majority (92.2%) believes that co-creation activities can be, indeed, more valuable to society in general (Annex 21). As for the last question in this section, also the majority of respondents (83.9%) shared their support for more activities like the one Continente implemented (Figure 10).

Figure 10 – Do you consider that other brands should have more participatory approaches to Social Responsibility, similar to the one Continente has practiced?

Source: Author's elaboration

Companies should, therefore, be aware of this emerging opportunity and for the "green light" of the general public for participatory CSR activities, especially for a new type of Cause Marketing that it is not tied with a purchase.

Moreover, organizations need to evolve from the traditional one-way communication approach and start pro-actively involving stakeholders in their CSR activities, by allowing them to participate (as, for example, the real CSR activity used in this research) and even by giving them the freedom to choose the cause that will receive the donation.

Both the two-way communication approach and the co-creative element represent a greater potential for companies to foster successful relationships with its stakeholders, which go beyond the usual consumption roles.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Main Conclusions and Theoretical Contributions

This thesis provided an overview of the emerging co-creative CSR initiatives and its opportunities in digital channels.

Traditionally, the main approaches for communicating CSR activities are corporate websites and annual reports. However, there were already some doubts about the effectiveness of these channels of communication.

Thus, the main objectives for this thesis were 1) to compare traditional CSR communication vs Participatory Online CSR activities, and their awareness potential, and 2) to capture the branding outcomes of engaging stakeholders, using participatory CSR approaches in Social Networking Sites, especially focused in enhancing empowerment and, consequently, increasing participation rate.

Regarding these objectives, the present research has firstly reinforced the social media potential in adding value to the communication of corporate social responsibility topics: by increasing awareness, these channels revealed to be powerful tools not only due to its popularity and vast audience reach, but also due to word-of-mouth opportunities. It answered to the call for further research by "*exploring channels available for dissemination of CSR activities*" (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013:1059), in particular, the social media channels, and by providing new research on "*the extent to which these new social and communicative arrangements are being realized by organizations and stakeholders and the attendant implications for CSR communication*" (Chaudri, 2016:422). According to the collected data, the traditional approach of communicating CSR activities in corporate websites and annual reports is not enough to guarantee one of the key challenges for the CSR activities success: generating awareness. Thus, as the social media phenomenon continues to expand along with consumers' and other stakeholders' growing expectations in socially responsible organizations, it is urgent that brands progressively rethink their CSR initiatives and start communicating them in new channels, so that they can reap the full benefits of such activities.

Secondly, it reinforced that, currently, individuals feel very low control regarding the process and the outcomes of CSR initiatives, and that by providing interactivity experiences and adding freedom of cause choice, organizations can increase stakeholders' empowerment levels, consequently enhancing participation, one of the dimensions of consumer engagement.

This research also managed to shed some light on Kull & Heath (2016) observation regarding the need for further empirical research addressing the need to examine if their findings about CSR with choice were generalizable to other forms of corporate philanthropy that were not tied to a product purchase or other consumer generated, revenue-providing transactions. The analysis of a real CSR event allowed to corroborate that co-creating socially responsible activities in social media can indeed increase not only the awareness for such actions, but also increase the chances of higher participation levels and WoM dissemination, and reinforce consumer-brand ties in the process.

5.2 Managerial Implications

In the increasingly digital environment, it became clear that the presence of companies in social networks is a must. The present study confirms the continued growth in the presence of consumers on social networks, with many of them following several brands. Online users are starting to connect with their preferred brands in social media and are demanding interactive experiences.

Although SNS present many opportunities for brands to guarantee that they remain relevant to its consumers and other stakeholders, the findings imply that social media remains yet unexplored as a CSR communication channel by organizations. Considering that the traditional communicating channels used to inform shareholders about these initiatives have a very low adherence by the general public and that they are failing to provide more awareness to CSR activities, brand managers need to devise different strategies for the optimal communication of these initiatives in new channels, which have higher potential to result not only in improved attitudes and brand image, but also in the increased intent of stakeholders to commit personal resources (e.g., money, time, etc.) to the benefit of the company, in a near future. Even for the users who do not follow brands in their SNS, for example, companies can still use SNS tools such as targeted posts (i.e. promoted posts that appear in target users' feed), to ensure that their awareness and relevance levels remains significant, especially when companies are seeking for users with specific interests.

Brand managers need to go beyond the traditional approach of posting updates on their websites, launching press releases or using annual reports to communicate social responsibility, which are compromising the results for crucial branding outcomes. For example, they can

embrace the latest innovations, such as uploading photos, videos, games or mobile applications that actually enable interactivity and engage stakeholders.

One way to enhance the interactivity experience and keeping stakeholders engaged is by deploying a relevant, creative and user-friendly process that enables them to participate and share with online friends, as the real example of participatory CSR initiative used in this research. As seen in this example, SNS tools can be especially fruitful for the dissemination of positive WoM: users can become brand ambassadors by commenting and sharing CSR initiatives' content with their networks, and they tend to be viewed as a less biased and transparent source than advertisers or even companies.

Organizations have many ways to deploy such participatory activities: they can link the initiative to a product or service purchase and for each unit sold they donate a percentage to a cause or they can choose to give full financial support, so that stakeholders' participation is cost-free. Whether they are tied or not to a product purchase, firms may share control with its stakeholders, letting them determine the charity or cause to which the company will make a donation: and they can do so by offering a restricted list of causes, predetermined by the company, or even by adding total freedom of cause choice. As Kull & Heath (2016) observe, increasing decision freedom across these conditions also significantly enhance empowerment and engagement.

Although co-created activities by brands and consumers could come in different arrangements, including the co-creation of physical goods or experiences, relational ties can be especially strengthened when the two parties come together to share a more emotional experience of helping others and solving social causes. Empowerment might also be fostered by engaging stakeholders to participate in strategic management decisions and giving them a more active role, thus enhancing their perceptions of personal responsibility in helping to solve a social issue.

Another important aspect regarding participatory CSR initiatives is that respondents considered they enhance several crucial consumer behaviour outcomes, but that they do not necessarily translate in increased costs for brands. In fact, if brands carefully plan their budget, by estimating costs, defining timings and setting a maximum number of participants or the value to allocate for the initiative (for example), they can reduce the risks of spending more money and other resources than they are able to support or than if they used the traditional approach with no stakeholder participation.

Taking into consideration all the potentialities of SNS, the way to develop awareness and enhance stakeholders' engagement is to pro-actively invite them to participate in CSR initiatives. The interactivity and freedom of choice are elements that can be added to empower stakeholders, by fostering a two-way dialogue and by sharing control over a meaningful decision. This new approach will redefine the role of the consumer as they no longer assume the passive role in CSR initiatives.

Instead of the traditional one-way approach, the implementation of a CSR initiative becomes a process of partnership between organisations and consumers, capable of generating increased awareness, trust, involvement, interactivity, empowerment and desire to participate.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study includes some possible limitations that prevents it to be easily generalized. First of all, there was some difficulty in getting a representative sample of the population, especially when also considering the cross cultural approach.

Second, the concept of CSR has multiple dimensions (environment protection, fight against poverty, human rights, fight against racism, and many others), making it difficult to generalize findings, since the present research focused in one real example related with animal protection. In order to overcome this limitation, future studies could focus in more than one social cause and compare the outcomes of adding different choice levels.

Regarding the second section of the questionnaire – real participatory CSR example -, asking people if they recalled Continente CSR activity that occurred more than 1 year ago at the time the questionnaire was launched might also represent another constraint, making it more difficult for respondents to recall the activity and its details, even with the help of a pictorial stimulus. Nevertheless, the results regarding recall rates were very satisfactory.

Lastly, on one hand, the findings were based on the perceptions of respondents, and on the other, some scales ranging from "low" and "high" might also be biased, as they have relative concepts, since the present study considered that being aware of less than five CSR activities represented a low level of awareness.

It is also recommended for future research to include engagement scales that allow the study of the other dimensions of stakeholders' engagement, which not only consider the behavioural component, but also the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the construct.

Despite the above limitations, the research produced interesting results, which may serve as a basis for practitioners and academics, in future studies regarding the CSR topic.

6. Annex

Annex 1 - Summary of Main Articles for Literature Review

Author	Journal	Year	Main Objective	Method	Main Conclusion	Further Research
Kull, A.J. & Heath, T. B.	International Journal of Research in Marketing	2016	Brands increasingly use digital platforms to co-create social responsibility initiatives with consumers. The present research explores the branding implications of an emerging form of such co-created social responsibility, cause related marketing (CM) with choice, in which the consumer, not the brand, chooses the charitable cause to which the brand will donate in response to the consumer's purchase.	**Quantitative data:** Study 1: N=116. Randomly assigned to one of four backpack advertisements for a fictitious brand (RuckSack) allegedly donating $5 for each consumer purchase. Measured empowerment, engagement and the extent they felt motivated to take part in the brand's donation initiative.	Showed that CM with choice strengthens brand attachment, an effect that is (1) stronger with unrestricted (i.e., choose any cause) than restricted (i.e., select from a list) choice and (2) serially mediated by consumer empowerment and engagement. While introducing a conventional CM campaign improves brand outcomes (attachment, attitudes, and purchase intentions) regardless of brand image (negative, neutral, or positive), adding consumer cause choice to the campaign benefits brands as much as (or more than) introducing the campaign itself does.	• Further research may want to replicate these findings in other contexts in which they may not hold. For example, are the findings regarding CM with choice generalizable to other forms of corporate philanthropy that are not tied to a product purchase or other consumer generated, revenue-providing transactions? And do the effects hold beyond prosocial domains? • Future studies could examine, for example, whether the effects of unrestricted (vs. restricted) choices on empowerment perceptions and brand relationships extend to product or advertising co-creation.
Ramaswamy, V. & Ozcan, K.	International Journal of Research in Marketing	2016	Discusses how brand value co-creation is enacted through brand engagement platforms, embodied in brand experience domains.	**Qualitative Data:** Case studies (Nike, Starbucks and Apple examples)	In a digitalized world where both individuals and enterprises have newfound capabilities, brands and brand building must now be viewed as a coming together of capabilities, engagements, and experiences.	• Further research on organization of brand value co-creation practices, in a digitalized world. • More research is needed on how platforms of engagements can be embedded in domains of stakeholder experiences, and how it can be enabled by joint agencial experiential creation capabilities. How can enterprises enable the individuation of co-creational experiences through experiential value creation networks that increasingly entail multiple partners, services, and collaborative communities?
Chaudhri, V.	International Journal of Business Communication	2016	Emphasize the need for subtlety and balance in communicating CSR, and point to the role of the media as a potential (dis)enabler for "getting the word out."	**Qualitative Data:** In-depth interviews	This study aimed to explicate the perceptions and perspectives of CSR managers on the role of communication for CSR enactment. As stated in the results, participants were in agreement about the importance of communication although they differed in the relative salience of the perceived role(s) of communication in CSR.	• How organizations communicatively engage with stakeholders, the specific processes of creating CSR cultures, and the role(s) of new media in altering, facilitating, or challenging CSR communication are potential areas of further investigation to fully understand the role of communication in CSR.
Saboo, A. R., Kumar, V. & Ramani, G.	International Journal of Research in Marketing	2015	Brands spend significant resources on social media to connect with their customers, yet there was limited understanding on how consumers engage with brands on social media and how it influences their purchase process.	**Qualitative Data:** Observation N= 2628 (Observation of 36 music artists during 73 weeks)	Consumer buying process is influenced by social media activities.	• Future scholars can examine the multi-period effect of social media activities (for example, increasing followers may not increase sales directly, but may increase sampling and comments in subsequent periods, in turn, influencing sales). • Future studies should investigate the antecedents of these social media activities and provide guidance to managers on how to influence their social media activities to drive the desired outcomes.
Servaes, H. & Tamayo, A.	Management Science	2013	Show that corporate social responsibility (CSR) and firm value are positively related for firms with high customer awareness, as proxied by advertising expenditures, but for firms with low customer awareness, the relation is either negative or insignificant.	**Data Integration:** Combined two databases	Their finding of an interaction between advertising intensity and CSR activities is consistent with theoretical work suggesting that without awareness customers are unable to reward CSR involvement.	• Their evidence that awareness about the firm is crucial for CSR to add value also suggests that exploring channels available for dissemination of CSR activities could be an interesting area of research.
Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B. & Hollebeek, L.	Journal of Business Research	2011	Explores the nature and scope of consumer engagement in an online brand community environment.	**Qualitative Data:** Netnography	Engaged consumers exhibit enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, empowerment, connection, emotional bonding, trust and commitment.	• Further research needs to incorporate studies examining larger online groups across different product categories, and/or drawing on larger samples of consumers. • The role of focal engagement platforms, employee interactions and the co-creation of value are important areas for further research. • Also, the specific interactive experiences between consumers, business, government and/or other agencies merit further scrutiny.
Du, S., Bhattacharya, C.B. & Sen, S.	International Journal of Management Reviews	2010	Presented a conceptual framework of CSR communication and analysed its different aspects, from message content and communication channels to company- and stakeholder-specific factors that influence the effectiveness of CSR communication.	n.a.	Stakeholders' low awareness of and scepticism towards companies' CSR activities are critical impediments in companies' attempts to maximize business benefits from their CSR investment.	• Pointed out to an urgent need for both academicians and practitioners to get a deeper understanding of how to communicate CSR more effectively to stakeholders.

Annex 2 – Online Questionnaire

Co-creation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on Facebook

This questionnaire is part of my Master's thesis in Marketing, which aims to identify the potential of co-creation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in digital media.

The survey will take approximately 4 minutes to fill in (you won't have to answer to all 11 pages) and the information collected will be kept anonymous and used only for academic purposes.

Thank you for your availability and collaboration!

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Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.

Part 1: Participative Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Facebook

What social networks do you use most often?

	Never	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Facebook	○	○	○	○	○
Instagram	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

How many brands do you follow on social networks? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
None	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Many (More than 10)

How often do you use corporate websites to find out more about their Social Responsibility initiatives? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Always

How often do you use corporate annual reports to learn more about their Social Responsibility initiatives? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Always

Do you consider yourself well informed about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Uninformed (0 initiatives)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Well informed (10+ initiatives)

Do you think social networking could be a more effective way of communicating CSR initiatives than other traditional communication channels (e.g. CSR sections in annual reports and brand websites)? *

O Yes

O No

Do you think that companies should invite stakeholders to participate in solving social responsibility issues through co-creation on social networks? *

O Yes

O No

Participative CSR activities in social networks lead to: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Improved brand image	O	O	O	O	O
Increased brand attachment	O	O	O	O	O
Increased purchase intention	O	O	O	O	O
Increased trust	O	O	O	O	O
Increased costs for the brand	O	O	O	O	O
Increased public engagement	O	O	O	O	O
Increased initiatives' awareness	O	O	O	O	O

Currently, what level of control do you feel about Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (i.e. in terms of freedom of choice on the social cause for donation, influence on results, etc.)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
No Control	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Full Control

Would you feel more in control if a brand lets you be a part of their Social Responsibility initiatives? *

○ Yes

○ No

If the brand also gave you the freedom to choose the social cause for the initiative (e.g. combating poverty, protecting the environment, etc.), what perception would you have of your level of control and influence over it? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
No Control	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Full Control

With regard to social issues, what is usually your propensity to disseminate such messages by sharing with others (friends, family, etc.)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very Low	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very High

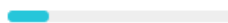Do you consider that Facebook has the potential to raise awareness about CSR activities? *

○ Yes

○ No

Would you consider yourself more emotionally connected to a brand after both have worked together to solve a social issue? *

○ Yes

○ No

ANTERIOR   SEGUINTE   ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬   Página 2 de 11

Part 2: Participative Social Responsibility. A Continente initiative (Portuguese Retailer) on Facebook

Context:
In May 2016, Continente and Animalife (Portuguese Retailer and Non-Profit Org) created a Social Responsibility initiative that consisted of donating 100g of feed to each new fan on Continent's Facebook page.
Facebook users had about 1 week to join and share with friends. The more fans they had, the more animals they could help.
At the end, the publication had more than 86 thousand interactions, being donated 3.2 tonnes of feed.

FAÇA LIKE!
POR CADA NOVO FÃ DA PÁGINA FACEBOOK CONTINENTE, VAMOS RECEBER 100G DE RAÇÃO! :)

1 FÃ = 100G = ♡

missão continente   Animalife ♥

Do you remember Continente's Social Responsibility activity on Facebook? *

○ Yes

○ No

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Did you participate in this activity? (Just "Liked" Continent's brand page or helped to spread) *

○ Yes

○ No

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What made you participate? Select all that apply: *

☐ I found this cause to be relevant to me

☐ Easy to participate

☐ It did not involve any monetary expense for me

☐ I felt it was my duty as a citizen

☐ Outra:

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What made you choose not to participate? Select all that apply: *

☐ The cause was not relevant to me

☐ I do not trust the brand

☐ Would have no benefit with the initiative

☐ Outra:

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Did you share or refer this activity to any of your friends / contacts? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

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If you had been aware of this initiative, what would be your predisposition to participate? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Would not participate	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Would definitely participate

And what would be your willingness to share the initiative (e.g. sharing the post, talking to friends, etc.)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Would not share it	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Would definitely share it

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After this initiative, what impact do you think existed in the image of this brand? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very negative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very positive

Considering a co-creation perspective, where each person can contribute and help to get the word out, do you think that such initiatives can be more beneficial to society in general than if companies only acted alone? *

○ Yes

○ No

In your opinion, do you consider that other brands should have more participative approaches to Social Responsibility, similar to the one the Continente has practiced? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

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Socio-Demographic Characterization

Nationality *

A sua resposta

Age *

A sua resposta

Gender *

○ Male

○ Female

Education *

○ Basic Education

○ High school

○ Bachelor

○ Master

○ PhD

○ Outra:

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Co-creation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on Facebook

Thank you for your participation!
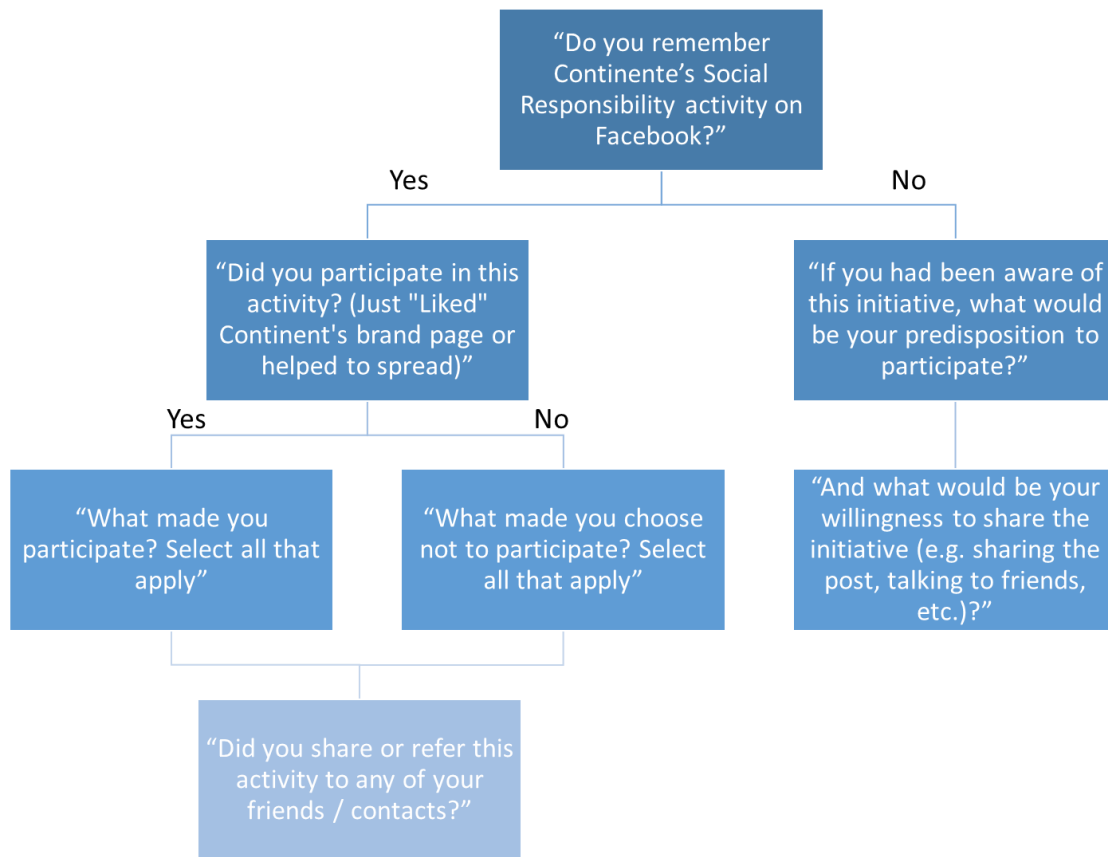
ANTERIOR SUBMETER   Página 11 de 11

Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.

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Annex 3 –Flow chart for Section II question routing

Annex 4 – Respondents country of origin

	Frequency	Percent
Portugal	265	82,3%
USA	13	4,0%
UK	12	3,7%
Germany	7	2,2%
Italy	4	1,2%
Netherlands	4	1,2%
Canada	3	0,9%
France	2	0,6%
India	2	0,6%
Australia	1	0,3%
Bulgaria	1	0,3%
Kazakhstan	1	0,3%
Kenya	1	0,3%
New Zealand	1	0,3%
Romania	1	0,3%
Singapore	1	0,3%
South Korea	1	0,3%
Spain	1	0,3%
Taiwan	1	0,3%
Total	**322**	**100%**

Annex 5 – Nº of brands followed (Ungrouped Categories)

	N	%	Cumulative %
None (0)	37	11.5	11.5
2	12	3.7	15.2
3	24	7.5	22.7
4	17	5.3	28.0
5	29	9.0	37.0
6	24	7.5	44.4
7	17	5.3	49.7
8	32	9.9	59.6
9	8	2.5	62.1
Many (+10)	122	37.9	100.0
Total	322	100.0	

Annex 6 – Use of Corporate Websites and Annual Reports

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Use of corporate websites	322	1	10	3,27	2,441
Use of corporate annual reports	322	1	10	1,93	1,829
Valid N (listwise)	322				

Annex 7 – Social networking more effective communication channel?
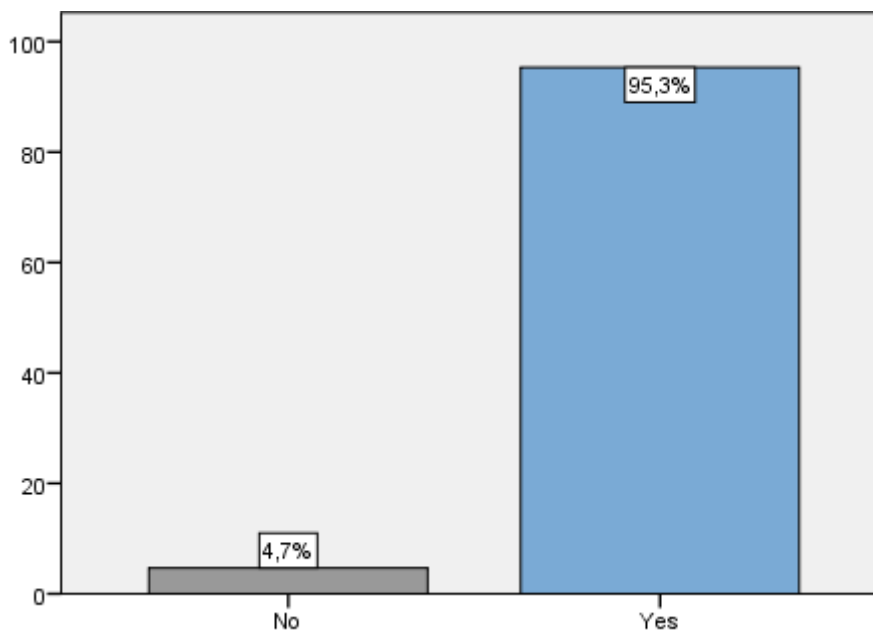
Annex 8 – Do you consider that Facebook has the potential to raise awareness about CSR activities?
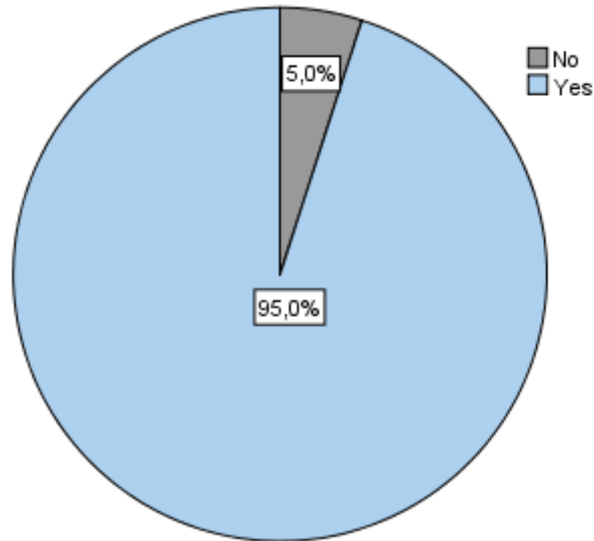
Annex 9 – Independent Samples T-Test (median split method)

Group Statistics

	Nº of brands followed	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CSR awareness	Many brands	162	2,64	2,174	,171
	Few Brands	160	2,62	1,737	,137

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CSR awareness	Equal variances assumed	5,34	,021	,106	320	,916	,023	,219	-,409	,455
	Equal variances not assumed			,106	307	,916	,023	,219	-,408	,455

Annex 10 – Participatory CSR Branding Outcomes

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Improved brand image	322	1	5	4,27	,853
Increased brand attachment	322	1	5	4,19	,831
Increased purchase intention	322	1	5	3,62	,832
Increased trust	322	1	5	3,86	,909
Increased costs for the brand	322	1	5	2,80	,862
Increased public engagement	322	1	5	4,24	,840
Increased awareness	322	1	5	4,30	,813
Valid N (listwise)	322				

Annex 11 – Paired Samples t-test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Empowerment after adding freedom of choice	6,72	322	2,097	,117
	Current level of control	3,46	322	2,028	,113

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Empowerment after adding freedom of choice & Current level of control	322	,190	,001

Annex 12 – Boxplot mean analysis for Matched-pairs T-Test
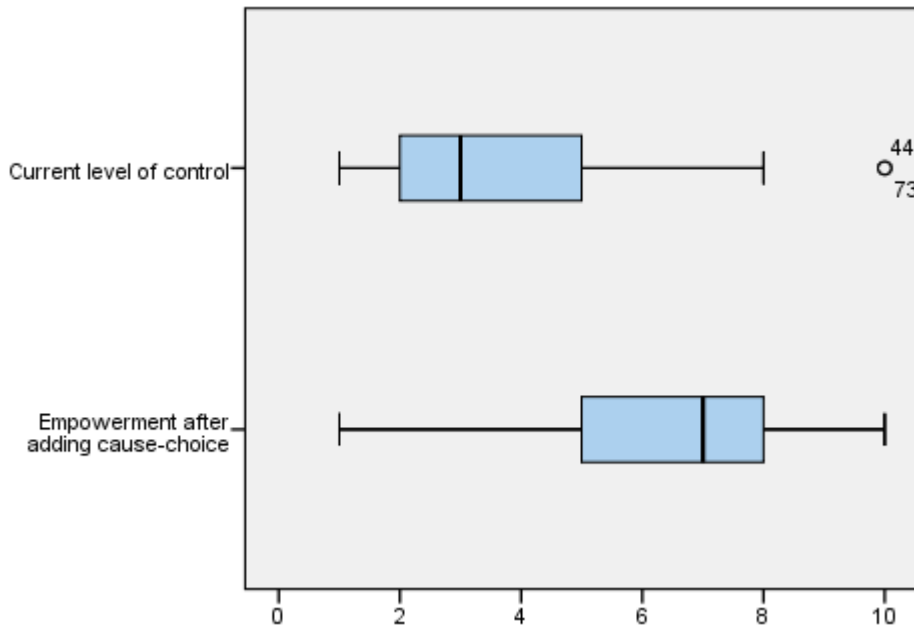
Annex 13 - Willingness to participate if aware

	Would not participate	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Would definitely participate	Total
N	20	5	1	10	14	15	17	31	17	92	222
Valid %	9.0	2.3	.5	4.5	6.3	6.8	7.7	14.0	7.7	41.4	100
Cumulative %	9.0	11.3	11.7	16.2	22.5	29.3	36.9	50.9	58.6	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Participation willingness if aware	222	1	10	7,54	2,921
Valid N (listwise)	222				

Annex 14 – Reasons to participate summary

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Reasons to participate[a]	72	22,4%	250	77,6%	322	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
Reasons to participate[a]	Relevant	55	34.6	76.4
	Easy	53	33.3	73.6
	No expense	24	15.1	33.3
	Duty as citizen	24	15.1	33.3
	Other	3	1.9	4.2
Total		159	100.0	220.8

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Annex 15 – Reasons not to participate summary

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Reasons not to participate[a]	28	8,7%	294	91,3%	322	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
Reasons not to participate[a]	Not Relevant	14	42.4	50.0
	No Trust	6	18.2	21.4
	No Benefit	5	15.2	17.9
	Other	8	24.2	28.6
Total		33	100.0	117.9

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.
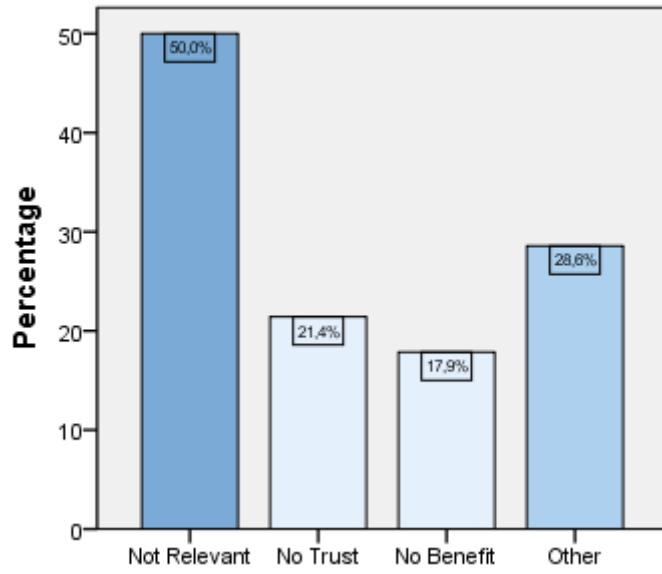
Annex 16 – Did you share the activity?
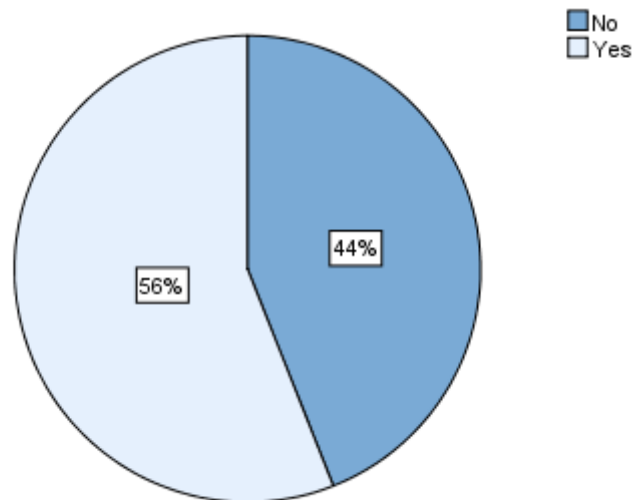
Annex 17 - Willingness to share if aware

	Would not share it	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Would definitely share it	Total
N	21	6	11	12	43	18	16	37	16	42	222
Valid %	9.5	2.7	5.0	5.4	19.4	8.1	7.2	16.7	7.2	18.9	100
Cumulative %	9.5	12.2	17.1	22.5	41.9	50.0	57.2	73.9	81.1	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Willingness to share if aware	222	1	10	6,35	2,825
Valid N (listwise)	222				

Annex 18 - Feedback on CSR Facebook post

Dias Muito bem parabénssss Continente por esta causa maravilhosas como sempre em primeira fila 🙂 🐾 obrigada por ajudar os meus amiguinho muitas lambidelas da estrelinha 🐾 😻

Gosto · Responder · 🔘 221 · 6 de Maio de 2016 às 20:35

Carlos Espero que seja um projeto de sucesso porque os animais merecem todo o nosso amor e da nossa solidariedade. Se realmente é uma campanha verídica, o que acredito, bem hajam.

Gosto · Responder · 🔘 92 · 6 de Maio de 2016 às 16:23

Cruz ..temos que partilhar, temos que ajudar! Não podemos ficar insenciveis a esta nobre causa. Por favor.. AMIGOS, é só PARTILHAR!! Obrigado.

Gosto · Responder · 🔘 7 · 7 de Maio de 2016 às 19:40

Marques Só um alerta pessoal, é like na página e não somente no post! 🙂 bora dar likes.

Gosto · Responder · 🔘 16 · 6 de Maio de 2016 às 21:21

↳ Ver respostas anteriores

Pereira Fantastica idea, adoro os meus dois Sao parte da minha familia ,todos marecem o nosso Amore e carinho.

Gosto · Responder · 🔘 3 · 7 de Maio de 2016 às 12:55

↳ Ver mais respostas

Annex 19 - Continente participatory CSR post interactions (Facebook)

Annex 20 – Perception of the impact of Continente CSR initiative on its brand image

	Very negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive	Total
N	2	10	24	209	77	322
%	.6	3.1	7.5	64.9	23.9	100.0
Cumulative %	76.1	3.1	10.6	75.5	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very negative	2	,6	,6
	2	1	,3	,9
	3	2	,6	1,6
	4	7	2,2	3,7
	5	24	7,5	11,2
	6	34	10,6	21,7
	7	40	12,4	34,2
	8	81	25,2	59,3
	9	54	16,8	76,1
	Very positive	77	23,9	100,0
	Total	322	100,0	

Annex 21 – Co-creation perspective…more beneficial to society in general than if companies only acted alone?

63
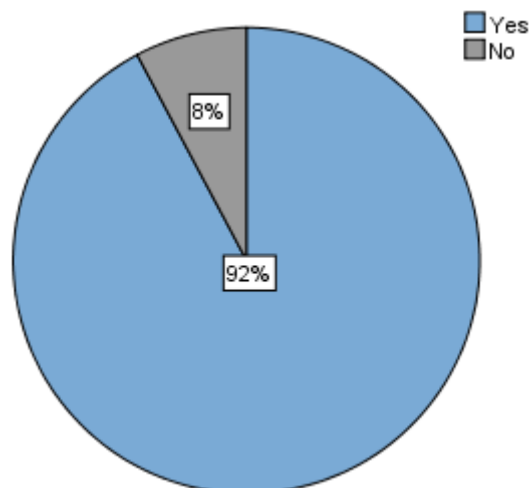
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