

**THE IMPACT OF SOURCE CREDIBILITY ON
CONSUMERS' RESPONSES TO CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES**

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RESUMO¹

A responsabilidade social das empresas (RSE) tem vindo a ganhar importância no mundo, não só por razões negativas (quando existem atos de irresponsabilidade social) mas também existindo a expectativa positiva de que as empresas partilhem com a sociedade a riqueza que geram através da sua atividade. Não são só os consumidores que valorizam as iniciativas que as empresas desenvolvem nesta área, mas também os restantes *stakeholders*.

A maioria dos estudos realizados no âmbito do comportamento do consumidor foca-se no conhecimento que os consumidores adquirem por diversas vias, mas não no impacto que a credibilidade das fontes de comunicação pode ter nas suas reações. Neste sentido, o presente estudo, procura adicionar mais um importante fator no que toca a prever as respostas do consumidor às iniciativas de responsabilidade social – credibilidade da fonte de informação. Para além disso, também procuramos fazer uma primeira abordagem de análise das diferenças entre os consumidores atendendo aos seus traços de personalidade e não apenas às suas características demográficas.

Os resultados dos estudos experimentais desenvolvidos permitem-nos concluir que a credibilidade da fonte tem um impacto significativo nas respostas dos consumidores às iniciativas de responsabilidade social. Para além disso, verificámos que os consumidores valorizam a SER e esta afeta as suas intenções de compra. No que toca aos traços de personalidade, não foram encontradas diferenças significativas.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do Consumidor; Responsabilidade Social; Credibilidade da Fonte; Traços de Personalidade

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become more important in the world, not only for negative reasons (i.e. when there are irresponsible behaviours) but also for the existence of expectations towards the companies that share some of the value they create through their activities with the society. It is not only consumers who value the initiatives companies develop in this area, but also all the other stakeholders.

The majority of studies being developed in terms of consumer behaviour focus on the knowledge and information consumers gather about companies' activities through different sources. However, they do not take into account the impact of source credibility on consumers' responses to CSR. Therefore, the present study intends to add another important factor when we are trying to predict consumers' responses to CSR – source credibility. Furthermore, we also intend to use personality traits to analyse consumers' differences, and not only demographic characteristics, as it is used by most researchers.

The findings of the experiments developed allow us to conclude that source credibility has a significant impact in consumers' responses to CSR initiatives. Besides that, we were also able to verify that consumers' value CSR and it affects their purchase intentions. Regarding personality traits, we were not able to find any significant differences.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour; Corporate Social Responsibility; Source Credibility; Personality Traits

JEL Classification System: Social Responsibility (M14); Marketing (M31)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been growing in terms of its importance and popularity in the business world. Researchers around the world have been studying and discussing it since early in the 20th century but there is not a universal definition of CSR. Some authors believe it includes the economic and legal obligations of companies. Others support the idea that CSR includes only the voluntary initiatives companies develop to improve the well-being and sustainability of the communities they are established in. However, nowadays researchers tend to focus on stakeholders theory to define CSR, since it is measured through the effects and initiatives towards each stakeholder, instead of the nature of those initiatives. This is related to the fact that it is proven by several studies that stakeholders, and particularly consumers, value companies active social role and CSR affects consumers' attitudes and intentions towards these companies. Nonetheless, the existing literature does not include important variables in those studies, namely source credibility and personality traits.

Source credibility can influence the persuasiveness of the message and, thus, attitudes towards the issues being released. With the increased popularity of the "new media", such as online sources of information as well as social networks, individuals are exposed to a great amount of information and, thus, have to filter it. One of the ways to do that, and specifically in situations in which there are time constraints, consumers tend to use heuristic processing of information, and heuristics such as "experts know it". Therefore, highly credible sources are expected to influence more than low credibility sources.

Regarding personality traits, their importance is related to the fact that beyond consumers we are all human beings, and what defines ourselves is our personality, and not simply gender, age or our qualifications. There are five big personality traits – extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness. Our objective is to analyse differences in the reactions to the stimuli used according to consumers' personality traits.

The methodology developed is based on a deductive process of research and intends to reach a conclusion regarding the impact of source credibility on consumers' responses towards CSR. For that, our studies use two basic stimuli, the first one in which the

source is not mentioned, provides information about a company either positive or negative. Following that, we provide contradictory information and evaluate consumers' reactions mentioning source credibility. Thus, we can analyse the impact of source credibility on consumers' reactions to CSR. In the first experiment the companies used were real and well-known companies of the fast moving consumer goods' (FMCG) market, whereas in the second study we used fictitious companies of the pharmaceutical industry. Hence, it requires further research to justify differences or similarities between both choices, and to confirm our findings referred next.

Through two experimental studies, we were able to confirm some of our predictions. Firstly, CSR associations affect purchase intention. Secondly, source credibility has a significant impact on purchase intention, contributing to change consumers' attitudes towards a company. However, it is the low credibility source that has a higher impact when consumers have previous positive associations which are followed by negative information about a company. On the other hand, highly credible sources are only more persuasive when consumers have negative associations, and followed by an event that contraries them. Nonetheless, we also found that it is much easier to change a positive reputation than a negative one.

The implications of these findings reinforce the importance of developing and implementing a CSR strategy. Nowadays, companies are extremely vulnerable to media exposure, specifically through online sources of information. A single CSR crisis can affect drastically consumers' attitudes towards the company and ultimately company's financial performance. Therefore, it is fundamental to build a good reputation in terms of social responsibility as well as to have a proactive strategy of developing new initiatives that can differentiate the company in the market, as well as prevent any crisis of occurring and damaging its competitive position.

Despite the findings of our experimental studies, we suggest the comparison of companies' credibility with media credibility, to further study this variable and its impact on consumer behaviour. On the other hand, it would also be interesting to analyse the personality differences using a personality traits inventory specifically created and tested in consumer behaviour, since we were unable to find any significant differences between high and low scorers in each of the big five personality traits.

In the end, the present dissertation enabled us to add value to the existing literature through the inclusion of source credibility in the research regarding CSR, as well a personality traits as a mean to differentiate consumers' reactions.

Despite the fact that we were unable to find differences between consumers according to their personality traits, we believe that it may be related to the personality traits inventory used and, therefore, will require further research to test and reach a conclusion regarding this way of differentiating consumers. Nonetheless, source credibility has a significant impact on consumers' reactions to CSR, thus adding value to the existing literature by considering this variable in our study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalization has increased competition among companies as well as the pressure to improve their social participation. Media, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and consumers have been playing relevant roles in this increasing demand of companies' responsibilities, by revealing the irresponsible behaviours as well as by promoting the active role played by the society in general.

There is also a recognition that governments fail in addressing many of the social problems, which encompasses extra responsibilities for the companies (Drucker, 1984). Therefore, the debate regarding CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) has now shifted from *whether* to engage in socially responsible behaviours, to *how* to do that (Smith, 2003), because nowadays it is seen as mandatory for the companies that want to succeed.

Companies have also recognized that the traditional communication and advertising strategies are saturated, especially for industries such as the tobacco, alcohol and junk food industries (McDaniel & Heald, 2000), whose access to these media resources is restricted by law. Therefore, the sponsorship and patronage of cultural and social initiatives is an alternative to promote these companies.

The existence of a mixed relationship between CSR and corporate financial performance, led managers to believe that it was irrelevant, being seen as a mere short-term cost (Burke & Logsdon, 1996). However, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is an example of the impact that a socially irresponsible action can have in a company, through its various stakeholders, particularly consumers and shareholders, but the other stakeholders as well (i.e. employees, Media, suppliers, Government, local communities and competitors).

The Deep-water Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico, owned by the British multinational BP (British Petroleum), exploded on April, 20th, 2010, 20 miles off Louisiana coast, killing 11 people and causing an underwater gush of oil that tarnished beaches, wildlife and livelihoods along hundreds of miles of American shoreline. In spite of being solved in the mid-September of the same year, the consequences (environmental, financial and social) of the largest oil spill in history are still being handled by BP.

The company estimated in November, 2010, the costs of this disaster would reach \$40bn, associated with the cleaning up costs, legal fees and the delay to contain the oil spill, which led to a record loss of \$17bn in the third quarter of 2010 (Wearden, 2010). On the other hand, the share value of the company dropped drastically, from the incident until June, 25th, 2010, the value decreased around 53%. Considering just a two month period, this demonstrates the terrible impact of this disaster on shareholders.

Regarding consumers, there were several organized boycotts taking place in the US, as well as campaigns led by NGOs, such as the Greenpeace' initiative to create a new logo for BP (James, 2010) which have damaged the reputation and image of the company. Overall, this can be translated into a sales decrease, compromising the company's short and long-term profitability. Furthermore, BP also has to provide compensatory fees for the people affected by the disaster, as well as comply with the new and more strict regulations that the US Government plan to implement in order to avoid and penalize this kind of negligence acts (Saenz, 2011).

In an industry with a particular bad reputation regarding environmental and social issues as it is the oil industry, the oil spill' consequences were disastrous not only for BP, but also for the industry as a whole, damaging even more its reputation and consumers' perceptions of this industry, as Christophe de Margerie (Total CEO, one of the competitors in the oil industry) stated (Arnott, 2010).

Thus, examples like BP in the USA and the increase in the number of organized boycotts by consumers have demonstrated that CSR can be seen as a competitive (dis)advantage and affect indirectly the financial performance (shareholders' value), as well as affect companies' reputation, brand image and may also reflect on other products perceptions. Therefore, we can say that *doing good* helps companies to *do better* in their global performance (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Drucker, 1984).

Recognizing the impact of CSR on companies, Portuguese companies have also been improving their social participation in order to reduce the effects of negative events and improve their overall performance (see Appendix 1 - How are Portuguese companies performing in CSR?).

Bearing in mind that most studies have already analysed this issue from the perspective of the company or managers, this dissertation focus on the effects of CSR initiatives on

consumers. While most companies invest in CSR initiatives in order to respond to external demands, it is crucial to understand if this investment is effective by increasing consumers' purchase intentions.

The objective of this dissertation is to explore the perceptions and value attributed to CSR initiatives by consumers, as well as to analyse the effects of those perceptions on their purchase decisions, depending on the credibility of the source of the information about this area.

To accomplish this objective, we are going to have four main pillars to sustain this analysis. The first one will be CSR, in which we explore the evolution of the concept throughout times and focus on the present and future challenges. As the second pillar, we direct our attention to CSR in marketing literature, providing the state of art relatively to previous studies on consumers' responses to CSR. Furthermore, we briefly develop the influence of the credibility of the source of information on consumers, paying particular attention to the online sources of information. Finally, and because consumers are more than just subjects (they are human beings) we extend the already existing literature and explore the influence of personality traits on consumer behaviour. Personality traits are the basis for human behaviour and, specifically, consumers' responses, which means that different personalities react differently to stimuli, and that is very important to understand when analysing an area that is so focused on human beings' behaviour.

Overall, the present study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of prior CSR perceptions on the behavioural responses (purchase intentions) of a CSR event?
2. What is the influence of source credibility on consumers' intentions?
3. Do personality traits affect differently consumers' responses to source credibility?

This dissertation will be divided into five main chapters, firstly we will analyse the existing literature regarding the topics discussed and studied here; secondly, we will develop our research hypotheses considering past research and trying to add value through the inclusion of new variables; afterwards we will refer the design of both experiments developed in order to test the hypotheses previously defined. Following

that, we will explain the results both experiments allowed us to reach, as well as discuss those findings. Furthermore, we make some conclusions and recommendations, regarding the managerial implications of the results of both experiments, as well as we suggest further research in specific topics in order to improve and test our findings.

In the next chapter, we present the literature review of the four pillars studied in this dissertation, in order to establish the basis for the field experiments developed as well as to determine the responses to the previously defined research questions and provide further analysis of this topic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

This chapter focus on the evolution of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) specifically divided in terms of what were the past/historical approaches and the present view of CSR.

2.1.1 The Past

CSR has been discussed since early in the 20th century, mainly in the academic field. In the beginning, it was thought that managers were only responsible for the shareholders' outcomes; hence for the profits they provided them. However, the notion of CSR became wider, when the first theories about managers' responsibilities towards all the stakeholders arose. Therefore, following an historical perspective, some of the most relevant definitions or theories are going to be presented next.

Bowen (1953), considered the *Father of Corporate Social Responsibility* (Carroll, 1999), was one of the authors that defined Social Responsibilities in the 50s. "It refers to the obligations of businessman to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (cited in Carroll, 1999, p. 270). Hence, he recognized that managers were responsible for their actions and consequences that arose from those acts and decisions, and would affect the society and its different groups/entities (what would later be named as *stakeholders*) in their road to reach profitability.

After the Vietnam War and other events in the 60s/70s, the importance and visibility of NGOs increased, and consequently the demand for socially responsible behaviour increased as well. Media also played a very important role in this field, since a negative behaviour exposure could seriously damage the reputation of a company, bring unwanted legislation, as well as cause employee dissatisfaction (Cochran, 2007).

Therefore, in the 1960s, CSR was even more explored and redefined. Davis (1960) and McGuire (1963) identified social responsibility as referring to the decisions or actions taken by managers at least partially beyond what were the economic or technical objectives of any company, following the society's expectations. Later on, Davis and Blomstrom (1966), focused on the impact and consequences of the business decisions and actions on the stakeholders.

On the other hand, Friedman (1962) considered that the only social responsibility companies had, was to make as much profit as possible to be provided to the shareholders. This author believed that the government was the entity responsible for addressing the social problems and questioned the ability and qualification of managers to be involved in this kind of activities. However, as Drucker (1984) stated, governments fail to address all the social needs/problems of the society and, thus, it has to be a joined effort of the public entities and private companies to satisfy society's expectations and reach a better quality of life level.

Manne (1972, cited in Carroll, 1999, p. 276) argued that to be socially responsible an action must provide a smaller return to the company compared to what it provides to the society. Therefore, he defended that the actions or expenditures in social causes should be purely voluntary, which means that any action that was imposed by laws or regulations should not be considered socially responsible. Besides that, companies should not have any other economic objective when engaging in social initiatives. Obviously, this is less likely to be applied, since decisions rarely have just one motive to occur, social initiatives can, and usually do, have diversified objectives.

In the 1970s there was a shift in the discussion, from corporate social responsibility to *corporate social responsiveness*. Business should not just respond and comply with the social pressures, but also have preventive and proactive approaches of the society needs and the consequences of the company's activity (Sethi, 1975, cited in Carroll, 1979). It was also on this decade that the expression *corporate social performance* (CSP) was created, which is the recognition that companies have ethical obligations and that they must respond pragmatically to their demands.

In 1979, Carroll identified three conditions in order to companies to engage in CSP: (1) a basic definition of CSR; (2) an enumeration of the issues for which existed a social responsibility (stakeholders for whom the company is responsible, dependent or affects); and, (3) a specification of the philosophy of responsiveness to the issues previously identified. This new concept of responsiveness emphasizes action, pro action and implementation of a social role played by the company (Carroll, 1991).

Carroll (1979) also defined the four components of social responsibility (economic, legal, ethical and discretionary or philanthropic), which are the expectations society has in terms of the performance of the company. The economic responsibilities of any

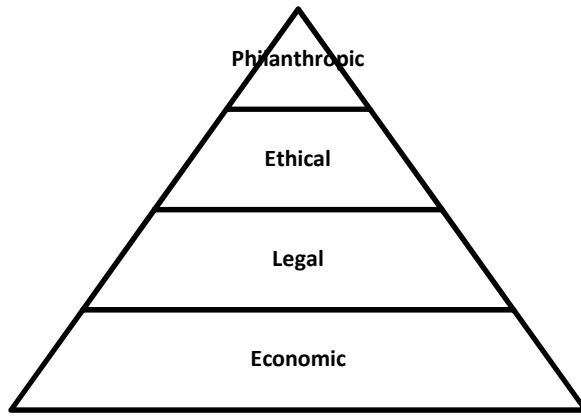


Exhibit 1 - CSR dimensions defined by Carroll (1979)

business are to produce goods and services, “needed” by consumers, with profit. Legal obligations are merely to comply with the laws and regulations promulgated by legal entities (local, national or international). Regarding ethical responsibilities, they integrate those expected values and actions that are not (yet) legally regulated, but are

demanded by the society, which can correspond to the first phase of the creation of any regulations. And, to conclude, the philanthropic responsibilities are mainly the expectations of the society for the companies to be “good citizens”, engaging in programmes to promote the welfare of the community in general.

Looking at the economic dimension, we can argue that by reaching a profit it is possible for the company to evolve and grow, being able to increase the number of employees, for instance, which is basically something that it does for the society. Hence, the society can benefit largely from this growth, apart from the shareholders (Drucker, 1984). On the other hand, without reaching a “minimally” positive economic result, companies can hardly explore any other levels of this CSR pyramid (see Exhibit 1 - **CSR dimensions defined by Carroll (1979)**). Overall, “the CSR company should strive to make a profit, obey the law, be ethical and be a good corporate citizen” (Carroll, 1991).

In 2002, Porter and Kramer stated (as Drucker had mentioned in 1984) that economic and social objectives should not necessarily be separated, but be integrated, pointing that many economic investments can have social returns and vice versa. However, he also argued that companies should not just throw money into good causes, but invest in those that might be seen as its competitive advantages. Hence, companies should focus on causes in their area of expertise, being more likely for them to address properly those social needs and problems and also being able to explore the synergies between social and economic investment. Furthermore, the increased competitiveness has created an opportunity for companies to differentiate themselves through social causes (Swan & Chumpitaz C., 2008). Thus, companies will *do well* if they *do good* and not *doing good* because they *do well* (Drucker, 1984).

In fact, it is possible to conclude that there is no such thing as a universal definition of corporate social responsibility, not even the motivations (*doing good* versus *doing well*) that should support the initiatives held by the companies in this field are unanimous. This fact has originated some criticism towards CSR, because it is a broad concept that is seen as an umbrella term, instead of a universal construct. Thus, people present views of CSR which are more convenient for their specific situations or challenges (Sabadoz, 2011). However, we may consider this as strength of the concept, since CSR is being adapted according to society's expectations and can vary culturally around the world. Societies' expectations are not static, so the concept of CSR is also evolving (Lee & Carroll, 2011). Rather than defining CSR as *not-for-profit*, companies should focus on the *not-just-profit* concept (Sabadoz, 2011), since companies are expected to go beyond their economic objectives and contribute for the creation of a better society, but without a positive financial result, they will not be able to invest in social causes.

We can distinguish most of the theories of the Past attending to the dimensions they cover, particularly the wider perspectives of the concept in which economic and legal obligations are considered in addition to ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, but also the most common is to consider that CSR goes beyond those economic and legal demands.

In spite of that, nowadays, CSR is associated with the stakeholder theory, which means that companies social obligations are not set according to their nature (economic, legal, ethical or philanthropic), but according to the individual or entity towards whom they are directed – the stakeholders. Thus, there is not a distinction in terms of dimensions as was historically used.

The EU defines CSR as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p.2). Thus, it focuses not only on the issues, but mostly on the relationship with stakeholders, emphasising the role that those stakeholders also play in reaching a sustainable development. In the next topic, we will be analysing the Present of CSR concept.

2.1.2 The Present

According to the stakeholder theory, a company can be viewed as an interaction between different stakeholders, which can have divergent interests. This theory also predicts company's behaviour based on three factors: (a) the nature of its stakeholders; (b) the norms that guide these stakeholders; and (c) the influence of stakeholders on the decisions of the company. This has to do with the fact that any company depends on its stakeholders and, thus, it has to balance those diverse interests. Maignan & Ferrell (2004) define CSR as "the duty to meet or exceed stakeholder norms dictating desirable organizational behaviours" (p. 5).

The Integrative Social Contract Theory (ISCT) is used to analyse those conflicting norms among different groups of stakeholders. This theory states that there are two types of social contracts that guide the behaviour of the agents: (a) a general social contract, that includes all the economic participants, based on broad norms that outline a general and universal set of behavioural norms of what is right and wrong; and (b) specific community norms, which have to be in accordance with the broader norms and, obviously vary according to the communities' values (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004).

Stakeholders are usually grouped in *stakeholders communities*, whose relationships amongst its members are based on shared beliefs, history and identity (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Therefore, these communities are guided by *stakeholders' norms*. On the other hand, companies develop their activities according to a set of rules and norms that are often a heritage of their founders as well (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). It is the management of the norms of these two entities that can make both succeed, in economic and social terms.

However, it is important to be aware that stakeholders do not defend and support only those issues that affect them directly. It is suggested by Maignan & Ferrell (2004) that the commitment to social responsibility can be measured by the impact on the *stakeholder issues*, defined as companies activities that are "of concern for the stakeholders communities" (p. 8) and which is very difficult to measure due to the fact that stakeholders communities often have conflicting norms.

According to the resource-based view (RBV) (Baker & Sinkula, 2008) stakeholders hold the resources and capabilities companies need to develop their activities, which obviously will influence their performance. This leads companies to respond to

stakeholders demands in order not to lose those essential resources and gain their cooperation, increasing legitimacy (Nikolaeva & Bicho, 2011).

Hence, stakeholders have power towards the companies and can adopt one of three strategies to make companies act accordingly to their demands: (1) legalistic approaches, in which they focus on laws and regulations; (2) exit strategies, in which stakeholders withdraw resources or threaten to do so – e.g. boycotts (Hoffmann & Muller, 2009); and (3) voice strategies, stimulating awareness and action among other stakeholder communities, for which the media and social networks are very powerful tools.

This is why it is so important to establish relationships instead of simple transactions with stakeholders. CSR has a great impact on these relationships, because it enhances companies to develop resources both internal and externally, such as reputation and culture, that will promote these long-term relationships. These intangible resources are hardly imitable and rare, which contribute to the creation of competitive advantages (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues, 2006) and allows companies to differentiate them from the competition.

Besides trying to avoid the loss of resources, the proper management of CSR can help to increase the available resources for the company. Luo & Bhattacharya (2006) stated that only once CSR initiatives are combined with an improvement in the internal capabilities of the products (e.g. product quality, innovativeness); the company may improve its financial performance (market value).

Therefore, it is important to bear in mind not only the demands of consumers, but also of the other stakeholders, due to the resources they also possess and can withdraw, damaging companies' performance (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Thus, next, there are some of the influences and effects of the CSR strategy on the different stakeholder groups (shareholders, employees, suppliers, government, community, media and competition), whereas the consumers, who are the focus of this investigation, will be analysed in *2.3 CSR and consumer behaviour* section.

2.1.2.1 Shareholders

Several researchers have been trying to analyse the relationship between CSR and corporate performance, however, the results are mixed. Some studies identified a

positive effect (e.g. Soana, 2011, Fombrun & Shanley, 1990, Solomon & Hansen, 1985), but others identified a negative one (e.g. McGuire, Sundgren & Schneeweis, 1988, Aupperle, Carroll & Hatfield, 1985). This has to do with the measure used to determine corporate performance, which was accounting-based return of investment.

Luo & Bhattacharya (2006) defend that the approach should be based on future value, determining the market value and its relationship with CSR. These authors were able to prove that CSR predicts market value through consumer satisfaction, but the effect will be positive or negative according to level of corporate innovativeness (corporate ability). Thus, a low level of innovativeness will have a negative market value from CSR, whereas a high level of innovativeness will have a positive market value from CSR.

Bearing in mind that the main objective of shareholders' investment is to make a profit, we can say that despite the fact that there is no clear relationship between a good social performance and the financial performance, there is evidence that a negative social performance is detrimental to company's financial performance (as was in the example of BP in the US), since shareholders tend to invest in companies with a moderately social performance (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues, 2006). That is why, social initiatives are not only incentives towards consumers' consumption; they are also marketing towards investors (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006, Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

2.1.2.2 *Employees*

CSR has also a great impact regarding human resources. One of the most important aspects is that companies do not own employee knowledge, employees do, and thus it is fundamental to understand that the relationship between employees and employers has to be developed through fairness and transparency principles, in order to reduce turnover as well as costs regarding recruiting and initial training (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues, 2006).

Obviously, companies must invest on hiring the best performers, but they also have to establish human resources policies (employee-friendly, including fair wages, minorities acceptance, *flexible time*, etc.) that will enable them to retain the best employees and, consequently, reducing recruiting costs (Vitaliano, 2010).

Companies which are socially responsible are more appealing to job applicants (Turban and Greening, 1996, Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), registering also a positive relationship between CSR and employee commitment, motivation and productivity, which results in a decrease of employee turnover (Turban and Greening, 1996). Thus, human resources can contribute to developing competitive advantages.

On the other hand, employees often incorporate favourable aspects of the company they work for when they identify themselves with the company. This is related to the purposes of self-congruence and self-enhancement and is affected by the CSR associations (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

2.1.2.3 Suppliers

Companies have been under growing pressure to have a socially-responsible buying strategy (Maignan, Hillebran, & McAlister, 2002), also due to the fact that any unethical behaviour has globalized consequences and can severely damage the brand/company's image (e.g. Nike, BP). Hence, companies must promote socially responsible behaviours through the supply chain, as well. Like consumers support of social causes is affected by company's efforts in this field, suppliers are also influenced to engage in CSR initiatives (Reuter *et al.*, 2010).

On the one hand, suppliers feel pressured to be socially responsible in order to comply with the practices that are already developed by their clients and, on the other hand, companies also have more strict requirements when selecting suppliers, thus, contributing to a sustainable supply chain. Obviously, this rationale can be applied throughout the supply chain and ultimately is fundamental to reach a sustainable development (Closs, Speier, & Meacham, 2011, Reuter *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, we can say that CSR and the proper sustainable supply chain management can play an educational role throughout all the intermediaries of the productive process, besides the ethical, environmental and economic dimensions (Closs, Speier, & Meacham, 2011).

2.1.2.4 Government

Being socially responsible may be a mean to avoid unwanted regulations created often only after there is an irresponsible action (Carroll, 1999; Davis, 1973). In fact, this is related to the third dimension – ethical - identified by Carroll (1979), which refers to the

demands and expectations of the society based on values that are not yet incorporated on laws.

Legislation is often created based on the discussion of specific events and ethical principles that emerge in the society. This is one of the reasons for companies to benefit from being the first movers. By adapting before it is legally obliged to, companies can be more flexible in their response pattern (Sethi, 1975).

2.1.2.5 Community

Davis (1973) argued that a better society produces a better environment for business to survive and profit. In a more competitive world with more demanding challenges, this is a very important benefit the companies can gain from CSR initiatives.

Besides that, another aspect that must be considered is the increased visibility, being able to gain recognition from both the external and internal stakeholders (e.g. employees) (Burke & Logsdon, 1996). Furthermore, the reputational gain from investing in the social field affects also the responses of local communities to companies relocations (Hoffmann & Muller, 2009) as well as to their products and, thus, improving companies' position to enter new markets and countries (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues, 2006).

2.1.2.6 Media

The Media are one of the most powerful stakeholders, because stakeholders are demanding more and more information in regards to CSR reporting and consider them as more credible than advertising (Nikolaeva & Bicho, 2011). Besides that, Media not only inform the other stakeholders, but they also shape their opinions, for instance, through editorial and opinion pages (Lee & Carroll, 2011). Lee & Carroll (2011) found that CSR issues were most frequently present and discussed in opinion pages (i.e. newspapers editorials), which set the agenda for public discussion and affects the other stakeholders opinions, as well.

Due to the easy means of communication, the Media may affect dramatically the other stakeholders' perceptions, by exposing the company if something negative happens (Lee & Carroll, 2011), since they tend to focus on irresponsible behaviours instead of responsible behaviours when covering sustainability issues (Grayson, 2010). Furthermore, newsworthiness can vary based on whether the news is positive or

negative, because there is a tendency to remember negative news longer (Lee & Carroll, 2011).

The investment in socially responsible initiatives creates a positive image for the company and, therefore, the media are more likely not to spread among the other stakeholders, abstract rumours, but only specific and concrete information. Besides that the level of credibility of companies towards media is related to their perceived CSR (García, 2011), which will influence the approach media use when reporting events regarding the companies – being referred as a *villain* or an *hero* in the articles published.

Therefore, we can say that the perceptions of the role a company plays on the social field will influence the news released by the Media and, indirectly, the information provided to the other stakeholders. However, due to the new technologies, there are other mechanisms stakeholders can use to obtain information regarding companies' activities and, thus companies must be even more careful with their decisions, because the consequences of an exposure online, for instance, can be disastrous (Grayson, 2010).

2.1.2.7 Competitors

The role played by CSR towards competitors is related to competitive pressures. Companies often engage in this kind of initiatives for fear of being left behind while competitors improve their reputation through CSR (Nikolaeva & Bicho, 2011). It is considered a competitive disadvantage if a certain company does not engage in social practices, following the behaviour adopted by their rivals. Therefore, we can say that this competitive pressure is mutual and also contribute to the growth and expansion of CSR nowadays.

Overall, we can say that by investing on CSR, companies are able to improve their reputation, which will affect not only consumers but also the other stakeholders as well. This is particularly important because people can play multiple roles simultaneously (consumers, employees, investors, among others) towards companies (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). CSR has a diversified effect on all those roles played by individuals, as was mentioned before, but mostly people tend to respond to companies based on their reputation, which CSR can improve substantially.

To conclude, companies have to be open to the external environment in order to be aware of its stakeholder communities' demands and norms. That is the main concern of marketing, the relationships that the company develops with its external and internal players. This leads to the market-oriented strategy. More than just the consumers, companies must focus on the other stakeholders as well (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004).

2.2. CSR in marketing

Analysing the evolution of the CSR concept in the marketing literature, we verify that this field is gaining more attention from the marketers since the 60s and 70s. However, the focus was mainly on the social duties attached to the marketing area and not on the company as a whole. Marketers tend to investigate this area restricting it to some dimensions, mainly cause-related marketing, environmental marketing and consumers' responses to CSR (but only considering very limited dimensions of the construct, due to the lack of any conceptual framework) (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004).

However, nowadays, there is the concept of *sustainable marketing*, whose goal is to contribute to a sustainable economic development. The areas incorporated in sustainable marketing are three, namely ecological/environment, social/equity and financial/economic ("3Es") (Hunt, 2011).

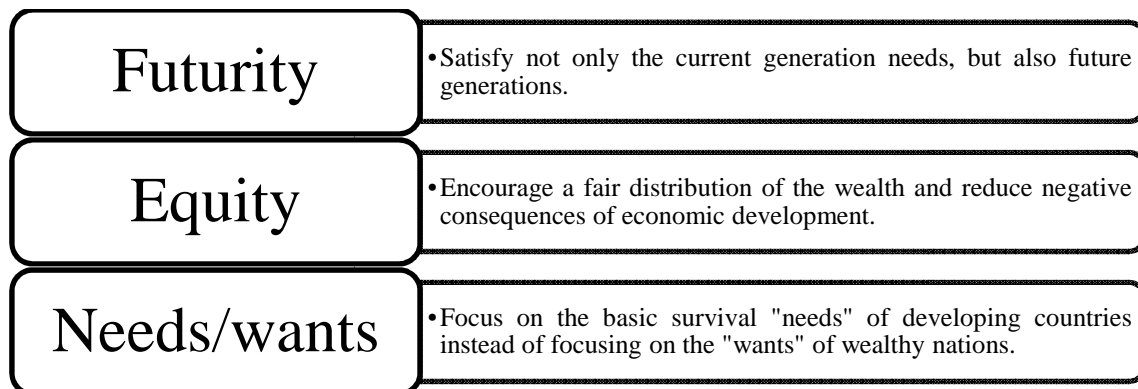


Exhibit 2 - Major challenges for Sustainable Marketing (Hunt, 2011)

Despite these three challenges (see Exhibit 2 - Major challenges for Sustainable Marketing), the true challenge is not to redistribute wealth among the poorer countries, but to promote economic development, through sustainable marketing (Hunt, 2011).

The stakeholder perspective is becoming stronger and companies have been under pressure to be socially responsible, focusing on the market, rather than on profits, as was mentioned before. Therefore the concept of *enviropreneurial marketing* arose

(Baker & Sinkula, 2005), which is related to the commitment of companies to develop marketing strategies that balance the objectives and concerns of both the society and the company. Hence, it goes beyond the simple recognition of the CSR importance in today's market place, integrating social concerns in the strategic definition and trying to gain a competitive advantage through the investment on this field, which will affect positively the market share (Baker & Sinkula, 2005).

In fact, one of the most referred aspects in marketing literature is that social concern must be integrated in the global strategy of the company, since any social responsible initiative will compromise its resources, as well as any irresponsible behaviour will negatively affect the reputation and attitudes towards the corporation. Baker & Sinkula (2005) refer to it as the *global corporate citizenship strategy*.

In order to develop this strategy, it is important that each company identifies the resources and the distinctive values that can create a differentiation factor when compared to the competition's activities in the social field. It is what Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen (2007) identified as investing in a *CSR brand*, creating an identity of socially responsible brand and not simply engage sporadically in CSR initiatives, but positioning the brand and company as *permanently* socially responsible.

2.3. CSR and consumer behaviour

In this section, we will analyse the impact and effects of CSR on consumers, the stakeholder this study will be focused on.

2.3.1 Consumers and happiness

Through their decisions and purchases, consumers intend to reach happiness, which is quality of life or satisfaction. This happiness is dependent of three main factors, namely standard of living, psychic rewards of environmental sacrifice and/or charitable donations (Huang & Rust, 2011). Typically, a wealthier country enables its residents to acquire more resources and, thus, reaching higher levels of happiness. However, consumers' happiness is not a direct function of the amount of resources they consume. In fact, they may be willing to consume fewer resources in order to reduce inequalities around the world (Huang & Rust, 2011) and, thus, having psychic rewards for their social contributions.

Consumers' happiness is, therefore, related to the quality of life of those around them as well. This means that others' well-being is also important to that happiness. Consumers translate their needs and values into their purchase decisions of green products and services (Huang & Rust, 2011). Thus, consumers are not solely affected by the social responsible initiatives developed by the companies towards themselves, but also to the activities that may only affect other stakeholders.

According to the Andreasen' Model (1995, cited in Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001), consumers can be divided into four stages in terms of the importance CSR has in their purchase decision making (see Exhibit 3 - Stages of behaviour change (Andreasen' Model) (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001), from those that are not affected by CSR to those that are interested and practice a socially responsible consumer behaviour.

Pre-contemplation	Contemplation	Action	Maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR does not affect their purchase decision; • Consumers do not believe that companies should engage in CSR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR is seen positively; • Nonetheless, it does not have a significant effect on the society and, thus, is not considered in the purchase decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers recognize CSR importance and are more active in the social field. • However, it is still not a determinant of most of their purchase behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers practice the socially responsible consumer behaviour, being concerned with the environment and health issues.

Exhibit 3 - Stages of behaviour change (Andreasen' Model) (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001)

Obviously, this dichotomy between satisfaction and social/environmental concern has to be understood by any marketer. However, some consumers are willing to compromise core benefits of the products in order for their purchase decisions to be aligned with their values (Huang & Rust, 2011) and practice socially responsible consumer behaviour.

2.3.2 Consumers' relationship marketing

CSR is an innovative and non-easily imitable way of strengthening the relationship with customers, focusing not just on the purchase behaviour, but also on the relational outcomes of that investment, such as word-of-mouth, greater patronage and the resilience to negative information about the company, which is very important in a more

competitive and turbulent environment. On the other hand, it also promotes the social causes towards the other stakeholders, stimulating stakeholders' participation (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004), as well as affects the consumption patterns, and promotes sustainability (Málovics, Csigéné, & Kraus, 2008).

CSR plays a role in routine consumer behaviour, over and above economic or rational considerations such as product attributes, and also the satisfaction that is associated with the perceived quality of the products offered by the company (Swaen & Chumpitaz C., 2008). Thus, it can also have a "halo effect", being capable of affecting the evaluation of not only a product but any new products that are introduced in a company's portfolio (Klein & Dawar, 2004).

The expectations of consumers in the social field vary greatly according to several factors, such as cultural characteristics, industries and products, as well as the individuality of each consumer (Beckmann, 2007). Brunk (2010) executed a qualitative research to categorize the aspects that consumers value the most (see Exhibit 4 - Domains of CSR valued by consumers (Brunk, 2010)). They are divided according to the area/entity that is affected (consumers, employees, environment, overseas community, local community & economy, and business community).

Consumers	Pricing	Labelling	Advertising (McDaniel & Heald, 2000)	Targeting	Product quality & Customer service	Freedom of choice/lock-in
Employees	Health, Safety, Protection	Working hours	Benefits & Compensation	Self-righteous management behaviour	Discrimination & Integration	Care, Respect, Motivation
Environment	Pollution	Corporate travel policies	Sustainable farming (organic)	Animal protection	Recycling	Pro-active search for alternatives
Overseas community	Exploitation of labour	Exploitation of natural resources	Violations of basic human rights	Human trafficking	Supporting questionable political regimes	Illegal trade
Local community & economy	Employment	Corp taxes	Community support	Involvement with dubious organizations	Charities Foundations	Importing
Business community	Fair trade & sourcing	Pushing competitors out of business	Mergers & Acquisitions	Intellectual rights	Accounting & reporting practices	Corruption

Exhibit 4 - Domains of CSR valued by consumers (Brunk, 2010)

2.3.3 CSR Associations

Brown & Dacin (1997) studied the effects of corporate associations on product evaluations. They refer to the information about the company that is held by consumers. Similarly to the concept of *reputation*, which is described by Brown et al. (2006), refers to “mental associations about the organization actually held by others outside the organization” (cited in Hoffmann & Muller, 2009).

There are two types of corporate associations, namely corporate abilities associations (which relate to the ability to produce goods with quality) and corporate social responsibility associations (fulfilling the companies' social obligations) (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

CSR associations influence products evaluation through corporate evaluation, not affecting directly the perceptions of product attributes. Therefore, these corporate associations can be seen as both a competitive advantage and a strategic asset for the company, due to their influence on consumers' responses to new products and to the company itself (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

There are several aspects that can influence corporate associations (particularly, CSR associations), namely the trustworthiness and credibility of the company in situations of product/service failure; company as well as third parties communication; and the general business stereotype (especially related to industries stereotypes) (Brown, 1998) (see Exhibit 5 - Antecedents of Corporate Associations (Brown, 1998)).

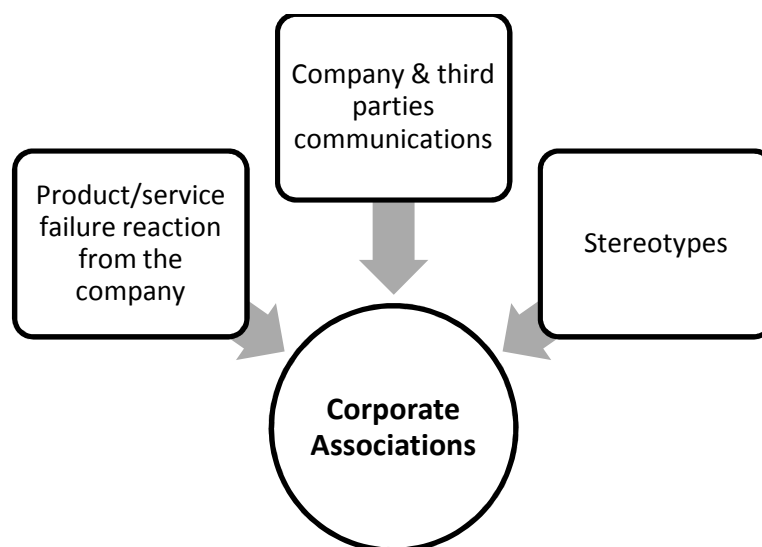


Exhibit 5 - Antecedents of Corporate Associations (Brown, 1998)

Consumers often have to make decisions without all the relevant information. Hence, CSR associations can play an important role in the evaluation of new products and brands (Klein & Dawar, 2004, Brown & Dacin, 1997), enhancing or damaging the reputation, evaluation of products, brands and companies, purchase intentions and the identification with the company (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

2.3.4 Corporate Attributions

Another concept that is important to analyse is corporate attributions. Attributions are judgements made by consumers regarding a specific event. They refer to causal reasoning consumers engage in when trying to understand companies CSR activities, determining the extent to which they may react in a positive way towards the company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

Therefore, the motives consumers perceive as being behind the social investments (corporate attributions) will influence their reactions. Hence, the attributions are crucial on defining the perceptions of consumers (Swaen, 2008, Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). In fact, several studies (e.g. Swaen, 2008, Bae & Cameron, 2006, Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004) proved that consumers tend to be sceptical about any social initiative that may have any business or profit *hidden* objective. Furthermore, the level of suspicion towards companies, in which consumers reflect on company's genuineness and motivations for engaging in those actions, is related to the prior reputation or associations of the company (Bae & Cameron, 2006). Thus, consumers care more about the *why* than about *what* companies are developing in the social field (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006).

This effect on consumers is opposed to what Peter Drucker (1984) argued (as well as Porter & Kramer, 2002), that managers should "turn a social problem identified into economic opportunity or economic benefit, into productive capacity, into human competence, into well-paid jobs, and into wealth." In fact, consumers tend to have negative attitudes towards initiatives that they perceive as being self or profit-oriented.

Regarding CSR attributions, there is no consensus in terms of the types of attributions that exist, hence a bipolar analysis of positive versus negative attribution or a more complex analysis, bearing in mind that consumers may consider simultaneously multiple and even contradictory options or motives (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006).

However, Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) also cited the dimensions that can be measured to verify the attributions of a company's activity in the social field, namely (a) controllability; (b) locus of control; and (c) stability (Weiner, 1986).

Despite the similarities of their designations, there are significant differences between CSR associations and CSR attributions. We can say that the first one is more permanent and functions as a social reputation of the company, whereas, attributions tend to be temporary and are basically judgements of specific events regarding the motivations or causes of them. We can argue that attributions contribute to the formulation of associations or the reputation of the company, since particular events and the way companies solve their problems or challenges is crucial to form the global evaluation of the company. Furthermore, associations influence CSR attributions, as was mentioned before.

2.3.5 CSR investment outcomes

The extent in which the investment in CSR will have the desired positive effect for the company, consumers and the social issues, depends on some external multipliers, such as: overall marketing strategy; industry (unlike oil, tobacco, ... industries) due to the attributions consumers make; company's reputation (however, if a company has already a very positive reputation, the CSR investment may not increase much their image, due to the *ceiling effect*); and finally, company's size and demographics can also contribute to strengthening the relationship between consumers and the company. Consumers tend to make better attributions when the company is small rather than big, local rather than national, and a small, personal, privately owned operation rather than a big impersonal conglomerate or multinational (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004), which is related to ethnocentrism.

Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill (2006) were able to prove that *fit*, which corresponds to the perceived link between a cause and company's product line, brand image, positioning and/or target market, is another aspect that can influence greatly consumers' responses to CSR initiatives. Consumers have more negative thoughts and resistance towards companies with a low fit. Nevertheless, some researchers believed that supported causes should differ as much as possible from the company's core business, so that the attributions do not turn to be negative (associated with profit motives) (Smith, 1994, mentioned in Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). More recently researchers

have concluded that it is actually positive to invest in causes that match the positioning and target (any stakeholder, but particularly consumers) the company intends to reach, making the company be seen as with more expertise to address those social issues, despite the scepticism that can originate (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006).

Commitment is “an implicit or explicit pledge of relational continuity between exchange partners” (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987, p. 19, cited in Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). It has three main dimensions: the amount of input, the durability of the relationship and the consistency. Ellen, Webb, & Mohr (2006) analysed the relationship between commitment (dimension: durability of the relationship) and attributions towards companies. They concluded that consumers tend to make positive attributions towards companies that engage in CSR in the long-term, whereas if the investment is on short-term initiatives, the attributions of those initiatives will be associated with merely trying to reach profit and increase sales. If nothing else, a long-term relationship is more likely to be noticed and understood by consumers, due to its longer duration.

Handelman and Arnold (1999) proved that consumers engage in positive word-of-mouth about the companies that are committed in the social field. In addition, there's a positive relationship between CSR and customer loyalty (Maignan et al., 1999).

2.3.6 Organizational Identification Theory

Another aspect that was mentioned in the literature was the *organizational identification theory*, aiming to understand what the impacts of CSR on consumer support are. Consumers' identification with the company in terms of its social initiatives can increase the level of resources available for the organization. This identification occurs when customers perceive an overlap of the organizational attributes and their own attributes. Thus, there has to be a self-congruence between both in order to reach identification. Obviously, this will benefit the company (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). These benefits can be transactional or relational (see Exhibit 6 - Examples of benefits of consumers' identification with the company (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007)), but the most commonly consequences of CSR initiatives are relational in nature (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007).

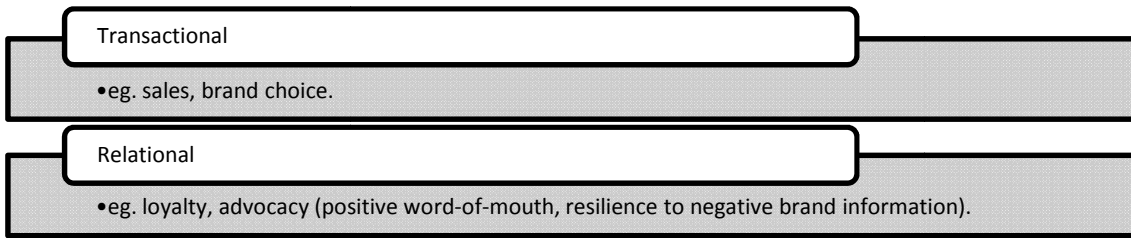


Exhibit 6 - Examples of benefits of consumers' identification with the company (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007)

Furthermore, *attachment* is the identification with the company, which is driven by the need of self-definition and social identity that consumers have. It's easier for consumers to feel identified with a company if they perceive its identity as enduring, distinctive, and capable of enhancing their self-esteem (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) proved that attachment is easier to obtain when companies support causes that are also supported by consumers and they feel identified with the company, sharing values and acting on them.

Besides that, consumers are more sensible to unethical behaviour than to socially responsible behaviour (Beckmann, 2007), which means that complying with society (or consumers') expectations has a smaller positive impact than the negative consequences that any socially irresponsible behaviour known by consumers would have. That is why it is important for companies to reduce this negative effect risk, by investing in social causes that consumers expect them to address. Hence, CSR may work as an insurance policy against negative events such as product-harm crisis² (Klein & Dawar, 2004) or brand misconduct (Huber *et al.*, 2010), in which consumers see such events as externally originated and in an unstable environment if a company is previously perceived as being socially responsible (Klein & Dawar, 2004).

2.3.7 Trust

Swaen and Chumpitaz C. (2008) tested the impact of CSR on the performance of the company through trust. Trust is important for marketing, since it raises brand loyalty and corporate success. Trust derives from a mechanism wherein characteristics, motives and intentions are attributed to exchange partners, with the evaluation of their potential being facilitated by the assumption that their behaviour is predictable and corresponds to what has been promised (Swaen & Chumpitaz C., 2008). There are two dimensions

² *Product-harm crisis* are well-publicized instances of defective or dangerous products (Klein & Dawar, 2004).

of trust: credibility (combining competency and honesty) and benevolence (partner's good intentions as regards consumers' interests). In the end, when a consumer is not able to assess the quality of a product one relies on honesty and perceived benevolence of the party supplying it (Swaen & Chumpitaz C., 2008).

2.3.8 CSR communication efforts

Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz (2009) were able to prove that inconsistent CSR information will lead to perceptions of hypocrisy, which will affect attitudes towards the company both directly and indirectly through CSR associations. Thus, the communication strategy can influence greatly the responses of consumers, particularly according to the levels of proactivity, abstractness and inoculation strategies.

Facing a negative behaviour, consumers perceive higher hypocrisy levels from the company when the communication strategy is proactive. On the other hand, the level of abstractness of the communication can also influence the hypocrisy perceived, particularly if the strategy is proactive, companies should engage in abstract information release, whereas if there's a reactive strategy, the information should be concrete. Hence, companies can decrease the level of hypocrisy perceived, but doesn't fully compensate the negative impact of the inconsistent information on consumers' responses. Finally, regarding the inoculation strategy refers to the refutational efforts of the company to either communicate an irresponsible behaviour that may come out and defend its actions, or respond to information that has already come out. This will reduce the perceptions of hypocrisy (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009).

On the other hand, companies acting proactively or reactively also influence consumers' perceptions, since they tend to blame companies about the events that lead to their reactive response, whereas if they have acted previously, it would not have such an effect (Lee *et al.*, 2009, Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006, Carroll, 1979).

As it was mentioned before, globalization has increased the level of exposure of socially irresponsible behaviours, as well as made companies release more information regarding CSR practices. However, the globalized business world decreased the control of the practices of all the individuals that integrate the supply chain. Therefore, the inconsistency in terms of the information released and the actual behaviours and practices has become frequent, which affect companies' image and sales (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009).

2.3.9 Purchase behaviour

Consumer purchase behaviour is influenced by both individual and socio-cultural factors. Behaviours can be predicted from specific behavioural intentions, which result from mainly two factors: (1) consumers' attitude towards the issue; (2) the perceived normative expectations of reference groups, multiplied by consumers' motivation to act in accordance with those expectations (Ajken & Fishbein, 1973).

According to Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) there's only a connection between CSR and purchase behaviour when: (1) the consumer, along with company, supports the cause; (2) there is a high company/issue fit; (3) the product is of high quality; and, (4) the consumer is not asked to pay a premium for social responsibility.

Socially responsible consumption (SRC) corresponds to a consumer behaviour that is "perceived to have a positive or less negative impact on the physical environment and/or the use of purchasing power to express social concerns" (François-Lecompte and Roberts, 2006, p. 52). Nonetheless, some consumers are willing to pay a premium price to engage in SRC, as in the case of fair-trade coffee (Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005). This is also related to the fact that altruism is seen as a mean to increase social status, by signalling that someone is able (e.g. financially) to be more altruistic than others – *competitive altruism* (Griskevicius & Tybur, 2010). However, consumers demand lower prices from unethical companies (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001). In fact, consumers are reluctant to compromise core product attributes (price and quality), trading off with CSR initiatives. Some consumers may even penalize companies if they feel that the social investment is made instead of investments in improvements of the product (Beckmann, 2007; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Boycotts may be used to penalize companies that do not comply with consumers' expectations in terms of social initiatives.

2.3.9.1 Boycotts

Hoffmann & Muller (2009) identified the factors that influence consumers' engagement in boycotts decision, which are mainly three: (a) the cost of constrained consumption; (b) the susceptibility of individuals to normative social influences; and (c) the perception of the boycott's likelihood of success.

The consumers' engagement in boycotts is one of the more drastic dangers of a socially irresponsible action or reputation. Boycotts are becoming more frequent since the 60s

and while they used to focus on economic concerns (e.g. price), nowadays they are more related to social and environmental issues (e.g. human rights of minorities). The consequences are terrible, involving both the damaging of the company's reputation and the financial performance. In fact, companies tend to change their behaviour even with a simple boycott threat (Hoffmann & Muller, 2009).

2.3.10 Differentiation from competitors

Even though CSR has an effect on consumer's behaviour, it may be reduced according to the context or competitive environment, namely if competitors are developing similar CSR activities, the impact on consumers might be lower and thus loyalty levels may stay the same. Thus, distinctive CSR initiatives not only can help catch consumers' attention, but can also generate positive attributions and attitudes. Being different from competition in the social field is crucial. When a company invests in many social areas, it is more likely that consumers will perceive it as coherent and natural with the company's values (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

In the end, it is possible to conclude that CSR initiatives are being more valued and known by consumers, as the research mentioned above proves, but whether that is a general tendency and will affect consumers' behaviour is the focus of the conceptual model designed for this dissertation.

2.4. Sources of information and credibility

Individuals typically process information heuristically and/or systematically. Heuristic processing implies that people have evoked heuristics such as "experts can be trusted" to form their attitudes, whereas systematic processing implies a persuasive argumentation to form attitudes. Obviously, the first demands less effort from the individual perspective than the second (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994).

Individuals engage in heuristic processing of information mainly in three occasions: (a) motivation for effortful processing (systematic) is low; (b) time or other constraints do not allow systematic processing; and (c) the issue is irrelevant. However, both heuristic and systematic processing can occur simultaneously and, heuristic can affect systematic processing (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). For the purposes of this study, we are going to focus on source credibility to understand the impact of this information heuristic processing on purchase intentions.

Source credibility encompasses two dimensions: expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise is related to the perceptions that the source is able to make correct assertions, whereas trustworthiness refers to the validity perceptions of the communicator's message (Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978).

Timing of the source identification has different impacts on attitudes. Identification posterior to the message lead to a not systematic effect on attitudes, whereas if the source was identified previously, it had a higher impact, because thoughts and judgments of the information were not yet formulated (Sternthal, Dholakia, & Leavitt, 1978).

Overall, a highly credible source will increase the persuasiveness of the message, while a low credibility communicator will damage the message persuasiveness and, consequently, the impact of that message on the attitudes of individuals (Grewal, Gotlieb, & Marmorstein, 1994). Therefore, a source identified as expert and trustworthy will result in more attitude change following the advocated message than a low credibility source.

Providing evidence of the information released is another way to enhance persuasiveness of the message. In case of high credibility sources, it does not have an effect (probably due to the ceiling effect), however, in low credibility sources it enhances persuasiveness, if the evidence was unknown by the audience (Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978).

On the other hand, different means of communication have inherent different levels of credibility perceived by the receiver of the message. Media can be divided in two categories, namely conventional media (radio, newspapers, magazines, TV, etc) and new media (blogs, online communities, podcasts, videos, social networks, etc.).

There has been a revolution in terms of media, particularly with online sources and the increasing number of internet users that reached 1.6 billion in March, 2009 (Grayson, 2010). People are more frequently using the Web to look for information regarding the most various topics and, due to the lack of professional editors to monitor the data accessible online, it is up to the reader to assess the credibility of the information found online (Chesney & Su, 2010). Other reasons for the credibility assessment of online sources of information are the non-disclosure of commercial interests and the fact that

source contacts are usually absent (Greer, 2003). Nonetheless, the internet is perceived as being as credible as television, radio and magazines, but less credible than newspapers (Flanagin & Metzger, 2003).

Even the most conventional media are trying to expand through the internet, in order to both reduce costs (promoting digital format) and take advantage of this increasing interest on online sources of information (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). Therefore, we are going to focus on this new media to analyse consumers' responses to CSR.

There have been more researchers trying to identify differences in terms of information provided in both types of media and the importance of new technologies for marketing strategies and, ultimately, the consequences of online exposure. Another aspect that has been widely studied is the credibility of the information found online, but not in this area – CSR. Despite what some might think, the internet is seen as one of the most credible sources of information (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). Nonetheless, credibility varies according to the type of online source (websites, blogs, bulletin boards/lists, chat/instant messaging, etc.).

Bearing in mind the study developed by Johnson & Kaye (2009) and despite the fact that it involves information related to politics, we can argue that typically individuals find blogs and issue-oriented websites as more credible than information provided in websites created by the interested party, as well as electronic mailing lists/bulletin boards were seen as less credible. This has to do with the fact that individuals find blogs more trustworthy, because they are under less pressure to release a certain perspective that is common among the conventional media. In fact, these authors were able to prove that people tend to use the internet to find information that they cannot find in newspapers and other conventional media, and mostly to have contact with a more diversified range of perspectives regarding certain issues.

Besides that, the identification of the person releasing the information online is not crucial to determine the credibility of the information itself, but it has an impact on the credibility of the individual (Chesney & Su, 2010). In fact, it is suggested by Eysenbach and Kohler (2002) that few internet users notice of content's author. This may be associated with the fact that on the internet, specifically, it is very easy to create new identities, which are frequently hardly proven. Thus, the role played by the identity of the source is reduced.

Furthermore, the design and language used can have a great impact on the perceived credibility of the information, since using a more professional design as well as using scientific language, will enhance credibility through the expertise dimension of credibility (Eysenbach and Kohler, 2002).

There are other aspects that can influence persuasiveness of the message, such as personality traits, which are going to be further analysed next (Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978).

2.5. Personality Traits

Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia (1981) identified the main individual difference traits that influence consumer information acquisition, namely demographic factors and personality traits. Due to the fact that personality traits are still not yet explored in what concerns to marketing research, we are going to focus on them as a mean to differentiate consumers and their reactions, instead of using demographic characteristics.

In fact, demography can mislead researchers to attribute certain type of reactions to age or sex, for instance, when it is actually consequence of personality differences among these diverse categories (Miller, 2010). Besides that, generalizing a male or female characteristic can lead to misunderstandings (not only regarding marketing research), because their personalities can be different from that generalized image and thus, the analysis will not be precise. Therefore, we can say that demographic characteristics may predict consumer behaviour but solely because they are correlated with some of the personality traits and not directly cause of the behaviour.

Personality is usually defined as a set of specified traits, which is a construct that refers to persistent qualities in human behaviour (Villani & Wind, 1975). These qualities are not necessarily constant throughout one's life, for instance conscientiousness tends to be lower in younger individuals than in older people. Nonetheless, personality traits are used to predict behaviours in average and can be influenced by emotions as well (Miller, 2010, Pervin, Cervone, & John, 2005).

Personality traits are defined based on biological factors to reach general tendencies. However, it is important to acknowledge that external and social factors may influence the development of personality and, ultimately, the way individuals respond in their

interactions, but they provide a conceptualization to analyse general tendencies (Pervin, Cervone, & John, 2005).

The importance of studying consumers' personality traits is related to the fact that consumers use product choices to communicate and signal their desired identities to others (Miller, 2010), but mostly because they have different reactions towards stimulus in accordance with their personality traits.

There are several frameworks to analyse personality traits. Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia (1981) used a set of six personality traits (tolerance for ambiguity, rigidity, cognitive style, need for cognitive clarity, self-esteem, and trait anxiety) to analyse this issue. On the other hand, there is also The Five Factor Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) which includes openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (OCEAN) as the dimensions of an individual's personality and which is one of the models that is most frequently used in research (see Exhibit 7 – Facets of NEO-PI-R, where the facets of each trait are identified). It is based on language and is usually measured by self-descriptive sentences or items that are single adjectives associated with those broad variables.

Openness to Experience	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasy; • Aesthetics; • Feelings; • Actions; • Ideas; • Values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence; • Order; • Dutifulness; • Achievement striving; • Self discipline; • Deliberation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmth; • Gregariousness; • Assertiveness; • Activity; • Excitement seeking; • Positive emotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust; • Straightforwardness; • Altruism; • Compliance; • Modesty; • Tender mindedness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety; • Angry Hostility; • Depression; • Self Consciousness; • Impulsiveness; • Vulnerability.

Exhibit 7 – Facets of NEO-PI-R

Analysing the Big Five personality traits, we can say that openness to experience describes the willingness and interest in having new experiences. An open individual is one that is curious, creative, has a wide range of interests and is eager to try new things. On the other hand, an individual that has a low level of openness to experience is more conventional and down-to-earth, being less tolerant to ambiguity.

Conscientiousness has to do with perseverance, autonomy and self-discipline towards the goals once defined. A high scorer on this scale is usually ambitious, hard-working, committed, organized, reliable, and self-disciplined, whereas a low scorer is careless,

lazy and aimless. Typically this trait tends to increase with age, since younger people tend to be less conscientious than older people, which is also associated with emotional stability (Miller, 2010).

Extraversion refers to the quantity and intensity of interpersonal interaction as well as capacity for joy. An extravert tends to be sociable, talkative, optimistic, and assertive; whereas an introvert is reserved, sober, quiet and task-oriented. Therefore, this trait is associated with the relationships with other people.

Regarding agreeableness, it assesses the quality of one's interpersonal orientation. An individual that has a high score on this dimension is trusting, helpful, straightforward, forgiving and altruist; whereas a low score on this dimensions represents a rude, cynical and uncooperative individual.

And, finally, neuroticism is related to one's feelings and we can say that is the opposite of emotional stability. A high scorer on this dimension is typically nervous, emotional, insecure, depressed and unstable, whereas a low scorer is calm, relaxed and usually confident about himself.

Globally, older individuals tend to display lower levels of neuroticism, extraversion, and openness, while they score higher on conscientiousness and agreeableness, than younger subjects (Pervin, Cervone, & John, 2005). Furthermore, regarding CSR, we believe that the most important traits are conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness. Higher scores on these traits should be more sensitive to social issues and, therefore, be more influenced by initiatives companies develop in this field.

The Big Five Personality traits were created attending to language research. From a wide range of words to describe personality found in a dictionary, several authors were able to narrow that number to make it easier to apply. The most known and best-validated inventory of personality traits is NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992), but it was initially composed by 240 items and only later reduced to 60 items.

There are some adaptations of this model, in which the variables are slightly changed, but which often correspond to the same measure, as is the example of the study performed by Kraaykamp & Eijck (2005). They used extraversion, friendliness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness as the broad personality traits that characterize individuals. However, we can verify that friendliness correspond to the

agreeableness trait previously described by Costa & McCrae (1992), while emotional stability is the opposite of neuroticism.

Nonetheless, in 2007, Rammstedt and John released an inventory of 10 items – BFI-10. Its accuracy is moderate and allowed an assessment in one minute of personality using this self-rating scale (Miller, 2010). However, previously, the same authors had created a personality inventory of 44 items – BFI-44 – which is more accurate than the short version of only 10 items (Rammstedt & John, 2007). The Big Five Inventory (BFI) rely on past research to reach a more integrative model of measuring personality and, in fact, is similar to the NEO-PI-R, only distinguishing itself on the extraversion and agreeableness dimensions, namely on the *warmth* facet, which is included in the agreeableness dimension on BFI ($\alpha = 0.82$) and not on extraversion as is in the NEO-PI-R.

Besides that, BFI-44 benefits from a more understandable and common language used, which enables respondents to better comprehend the items as well as the fact that it takes less time to answer the inventory (Miller, 2010, Rammstedt & John, 2007, John & Srivastava, 1999), which is a constraint for the present research.

The support for both Big Five models is mainly related to three aspects: (1) factor analyses of a wide range of trait terms in language; (2) cross-cultural validation; (3) relationship between trait questionnaires and other ratings and questionnaires (Pervin, Cervone, & John, 2005).

Kraaykamp & Eijck (2005) were able to prove that personality can affect the selection and use of media, as well as individuals' preferences in terms of media, particularly the selection of TV programmes and cultural participation (reading and attending museums or concerts). Openness resulted in the most relevant personality trait in terms of effects on media preferences and cultural participation (Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2005).

In the end, both source credibility and personality traits should be included in this research paper in order to understand their effect on the variables related to CSR that are going to be studied as suggested by Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz (2009) and Sen & Bhattacharya (2001).

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This experiment is based on three main areas that we expect to explore differences and relationships – corporate social responsibility, source credibility and personality traits. First, and because it is the focus of this study, all the stimulus are related to CSR, but the analysis will involve the other two aspects that may differentiate consumers responses as well as provide a first insight in terms of personality differences among subjects.

Bearing in mind that the objective of this dissertation is to study the effects of CSR perceptions on consumers' purchase intention, the design of the conceptual model intends to analyse not only the behavioural outcomes of CSR (purchase intentions) but also the cognitive outcomes of CSR, namely associations.

Associations refer to the previous information that consumers are exposed to regarding products and initiatives developed by the company. There are two types: (a) corporate abilities associations and (b) corporate social responsibility associations. CSR associations are the focus of this study, which encompass the activities developed by the company to fulfil its social obligations, differing from the product-level information about products (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

Several authors were able to prove that CSR associations are related to attitudes and responses towards companies and products. Positive CSR associations lead to more positive attitudes and increase purchase intention, whereas negative CSR associations will originate negative attitudes and decrease purchase intention (Brown, 1998). Basically, CSR associations contribute to the evaluation of the company as well as products offered by them. Ultimately, it is expected to influence consumers' purchases, here measured through purchase intention. Thus, the first hypothesis is:

H1: Positive CSR associations will lead to a higher level of purchase intention than negative CSR associations.

Consumers respond to information stimuli and specifically they are influenced by the assessment they make of the credibility of the source that provides that information. There are going to be essentially two stimuli in this experiment: a first one where source credibility is not mentioned and, thus, consumers tend to relate the information with a high credibility source (McGinnies & Ward, 1974); whereas in the second stimulus, the

source of the information provided will be mentioned previously, in order to assess its effect on consumers responses (purchase intention). The focus of this experiment is contradictory stimuli.

When facing data contradictory to what are their associations, consumers will rely on source credibility to decide if the information is trustworthy and from an expert, as well as because there are time constraints (as often exist in the real market place), which means that consumers are not likely to make a systematic assessment of information, but to rely on heuristics to process the information (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994) and formulate their judgements.

We expect that a high credibility source will increase the differences in terms of behaviour. Therefore, when facing contradictory information, a high credibility source will lead to a higher difference in terms of purchase intention (difference between purchase intention measure before and after the stimulus), affecting greatly consumers responses. On the other hand, low credibility source is expected to not affect or very lightly affect consumers, leading to a reduced level of purchase intention variation. Highly credible sources produce more attitude change than low credibility sources (Tormala, Briñol, & Petty, 2006). Thus, we propose the following.

H2: High credibility source will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than a low credibility source.

Consumers tend to respond more drastically to negative events or information, which means that we expect the existence of a higher purchase intention variation, when previous associations were positive and the information negative, than if previous associations were negative and the information was positive. In fact, it is easier to change positive associations than negative associations, which lead to us expecting to reach a higher absolute value of attitude change (purchase intention).

H3: Positive CSR associations and negative information will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than negative CSR associations and positive information.

Another aspect that is going to be analysed is the characteristics of consumers that may affect their responses to CSR initiatives. Personality traits have been used to analyse the identification with the company or consumer-company congruence perceived by

consumers in relation to CSR, however, to our knowledge, it has not been used to comprehend their effect on consumers' responses to CSR, namely purchase intention.

There are Five Big Personality Traits (John & Srivastava, 1999), which encompass the dimensions several researchers have been using to analyse people's personalities, namely agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion. Despite the lack of studies relative to consumers personalities' effect on their attitudes and behaviours, it is possible to theorize about the impact of each of these dimensions on consumer behaviour, based mostly on research in areas that are not necessarily marketing related.

Agreeableness refers to the interactions an individual prefers from compassion to tough mindedness. It includes altruism and also trust, which are two important traits when judging companies CSR attitudes as well as their intentions. *Conscientiousness* refers to traits such as reliability, self-control and will power. Most commonly, high conscientious people tend to think more often on long-term objectives. *Openness to experience* also has to do with values and the appreciation of experiences, being open to new feelings and emotions. On the other hand, people ranking low on *neuroticism* reveal a usual optimism, calmness, easiness, whereas if they are neurotic, they tend to display traits of anxiety and depression, and thus suffering more with events, as in the case of CSR. Regarding *extraversion*, it refers to a willingness to engage in interaction with other individuals, and extraverts tend to be more confident and voice their opinions more often than introverts.

Consumers use product choice as a mechanism to communicate their identity to their peers (Miller, 2009). Therefore, we expect that personality traits will affect purchase intention. According to the Big Five, we expect that all of them, especially agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience, will have an impact on consumer behaviour, as was also stated by Miller (2009) and Hirsh (2010). In fact, these four dimensions of personality significantly predict environmental concern and were positively related. Thus, higher levels of agreeableness, higher conscientiousness, higher neuroticism (emotional instability), and higher openness to experience will lead to higher levels of environmental concern (Hirsh, 2010).

4. EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

4.1. Philosophy of science and Experiments

Over the centuries, researchers have been following different ontologies in order to develop their studies regarding social sciences. Some of them follow the positivist ontology but others use a naturalism approach. The debate about which is the right one has been going on for as much time as research is being developed. The truth is that there is no single answer to that debate. The right ontology will depend on the type of research being developed, i.e. prior theory will be used to develop a deductive method of research or we will be choosing an inductive, less structured method.

Firstly, it is important to define some of the concepts involved in the choice of a research approach. Ontology involves the philosophy of reality, while epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher. Methodology is the set of concrete procedures to reach the knowledge of that reality. Knowledge is the main objective of research and is thought to be discovered and verified through direct observations or measurements of phenomena (Krauss, 2005).

Secondly, we differentiate both research approaches – positivism and naturalism. The first one is the most frequently used in science, and measures independent facts from a single reality through observation and experimentation (Moore, 2010); whereas, from the naturalism approach, researchers believe there are multiple realities, where individuals are unique, so is the researcher that can be biased by his own experience and interactions in those realities studied. Positivists use a deductive method of research, using statistics as tool for their quantitative research, whereas from a more qualitative perspective, the researcher should integrate reality and there is no such thing as an objective reality. Therefore, naturalists believe that researchers cannot detach themselves from the reality and perform their experiment in an objective and unbiased way, but rather, the research is a subjective creation of the interaction between the researcher and the subjects (Krauss, 2005).

By using the positivist ontology, researchers try to provide a justification for phenomena, and it is crucial that those findings and results are possible to be verified or measured through experiments and statistical techniques. On the other hand, interpretivism/naturalism uses a more personal and subjective process to understand reality in which the researcher is involved in as well as interacts with it. It is used

mostly to build theories which are later tested through a quantitative approach (positivist) (Krauss, 2005).

In the present research, we use experimental studies in order to control the reality and the variables we intend to comprehend. "The key approach of the scientific method is the experiment; the attempt to discern natural laws through direct manipulation and observation" (Krauss, 2005, p. 761). Therefore, we intend to manipulate variables to comprehend the outcome observed after the stimuli used.

Through the literature review we were able to know some of the important theories in this field which allow us, through a deductive process, to develop the hypotheses to test. The objective is to test existing theories and relationships found, and to add new variables, to be tested as well. Furthermore, regarding the sample to be exposed to this study, on the grounds that we are all equal and in order to aggregate similar individuals according to their characteristics we use students in the first study but extend the sample to the university population in the second experiment. We are all members of the same reality, being exposed to similar stimuli; we look for similarities and differences across people in order to generalize to the population.

To sum up, originated by a literature review, we develop hypotheses that will be tested through experimental studies. We manipulate variables to understand reality and observe the reactions of individuals (or consumers) to those stimuli. Following the justification for using experimental studies, we will further explain the content and design of our research tools in the next sections.

4.2. Experiment I

4.2.1 Design

This study employed the experimental method with two between-subjects conditions (positive associations followed by negative information and negative associations followed by positive information) and two within-subjects conditions (high and low credibility). Both of them are expected to have an impact on purchase intention, specifically on the variation of purchase intention after the second stimulus. However, they can vary differently in accordance with the interaction between both stimuli (see Exhibit 8 - Experimental conditions).

	Credibility	
	High	Low
Positive CSR associations, Negative information	Bigger decrease of purchase intention	Slight decrease or no change of purchase intention
Negative CSR associations, Positive information	Moderate increase of purchase intention	No change of purchase intention

Exhibit 8 - Experimental conditions

In all the conditions, participants first read a text describing, separately, two companies, namely Kellogg Company and Danone. The companies chosen have to do with the fact that both produce and sell FMCG and, specifically product categories in which there are similarities in terms of look, taste, feel, packaging and advertising with the competitors. Thus, corporate associations will have a greater impact on purchase decisions (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

Firstly, subjects were exposed to information regarding the initiatives both these companies have been performing in terms of CSR. They read a text in which companies are described in a more positive or negative approach (two between-subject conditions), in order to comprehend subjects responses. Then, they are asked about the *CSR associations* they have towards the company, which may be influenced by previous interactions with these companies; as well as *purchase intentions* of brands of the companies. Following that, we provide information about the evaluation of one of the products sold by each of the companies (Kellogg's and Activia) (see Appendix 3 – First Experiment), being the subjects asked again about their purchase intention. With that, we intend to analyse the influence of such information (positive or negative) in changing consumers' attitudes towards the company. Furthermore, the source of this information was described in the paragraph before the content itself, existing two conditions, high and low credibility. Therefore, the objective is to test the effect of source credibility on purchase intention variation.

As was mentioned before, Media is divided in two categories – conventional and new media. The latter is growing in importance with the increase of the number of internet users and, thus, we used two credibility conditions to analyse two means of communication that are included in this second category of media, namely issue-oriented websites (Goodguide) and e-mail, which correspond to high and low credibility sources of information, respectively (Johnson & Kaye, 2009).

GoodGuide is an online source of information regarding products and companies performance in terms of health, society care and environmental protection, through an assembled team of scientific and technology experts who take on the challenge of organizing the world's product information. Therefore, we can say that GoodGuide is a highly credible information source as an issue-oriented and independent website (Johnson & Kaye, 2009), reducing trust issues associated with some information released on the internet. On the other hand, the freedom and independency of the team and reviews provided on the website has an effect in increasing the credibility of the information released, and thus leading to stronger impact on consumers' responses (Johnson & Kaye, 2009).

The objective of this database is to stimulate social responsibility and improvements in products to make them healthier. Thus, since GoodGuide has a great amount of information about products and companies, consumers may decide which product is more aligned with their values and preferences, and therefore, affect purchase intention.

Considering that GoodGuide ranks companies and products in terms of three performance criteria – impact on health, environment and society – we are going to focus on the three of them in addition to associations in order to predict the effects of both on purchase intention.

Opposite of Goodguide in terms of credibility is e-mailing (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). The fact that it is harder to prove the origin and trustworthiness of the e-mail messages make them less credible, as was proven by these authors. Furthermore, they are often forwarded several times before they are received, with the intermediaries being able to modify key aspects of the message, without revealing the identity of the author. It is important to mention that we are considering here e-mails whose origin is not a subscription in any website, since our interest is in considering two sources of information with different levels of credibility and if the e-mail was expected and subscribed to, its credibility would be different and predictably higher.

We intend to test the *variation of purchase intention* according to the credibility of the source and the existence of information that contraries the initial data and opinion regarding CSR and the company.

To conclude, participants were asked to complete the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John & Srivastava, 1999) as well as to provide their demographic characteristics. Thus, and according to Rammstedt & John (2007), the BFI-44 is adequate to this kind of studies, and the fact that it uses a simpler language also contributes to make it easier and faster to apply (John & Srivastava, 1999), since it is more understandable for subjects.

Overall, the variables that were manipulated to understand their effect on the other constructs were the CSR background and the source of the articles presented.

4.2.2 Measures

The dependent variables to be measured are mainly three. Firstly, *CSR associations* were measured attending to one item in which respondents were asked to rate the CSR performance of the company (“In my opinion, the company is a socially responsible company.”), based on the information provided as well as on previous experiences with the company. This variable was measured in a scale of 1 = “Completely disagree” to 7 = “Completely agree” (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009).

After that, subjects were asked their willingness to buy products of this company in a single item (“I would buy products of this company.”), which reflects their *purchase intention 1* based on the historical overview of the CSR activities the company has been developing and the conditions manipulated. This variable was measured in a scale of 1 = “Completely disagree” to 7 = “Completely agree”.

Furthermore, and after it was provided information about a specific product of the company, *purchase intention 2* was measured again. This allowed us to be able to comprehend the difference between both (*purchase intention variation*), and assess the effects of the information provided in consumers’ attitudes change. *Purchase intention variation* varied from -6 to +6, since it resulted from the difference between *purchase intention 2* – *purchase intention 1*.

To be able to analyse consumers’ personality differences in terms of their reactions to CSR, we used BFI-44 (John & Srivastava, 1999), which is measured in a scale of 1 = “Completely disagree” to 7 = “Completely agree” (see 0 Appendix 2 - Big Five Inventory (BFI-44) for the complete inventory used).

4.2.3 Sample

In this experiment, 200 participants from Lisbon University Institute voluntarily participated and were randomly assigned to the different conditions. Subjects' age ranged from 18 to 36 years (mode = 21 and average = 22). Most participants were female (57%) and their qualifications were secondary school, bachelor or degree, with the higher percentage of subjects having finished their bachelor (47%).

4.3. Experiment II

Our objective with this second experiment is to test the second hypothesis and prove the existence of differences among the two credibility conditions used.

We expect that source credibility will have a significant effect on purchase intention variations. Typically, high credibility sources will increase the likelihood of changing attitudes, as well as changing behavioural intentions (Tormala, Briñol, & Petty, 2006); whereas low credibility sources will generate scepticism and will likely originate a lower variation of purchase intention.

4.3.1 Design

In this second experiment, we will be using the same stimuli and conditions, but here they are all between-subjects. Thus the conditions are related to CSR associations (positive or negative) and source credibility (high or low) and these are the variables that are going to be manipulated.

One of the first things that we must consider is if we should use fictitious or real companies. Due to the fact that consumers have different associations, not only CSR associations, but also corporate abilities associations, towards real companies, which are very hard to control and measure, we decided to use real companies but under fictitious names. Hence, we have a higher control over consumers' previous responses towards the companies.

The companies used are from the pharmaceutical industry (as in the study developed by Bae & Cameron, 2006). This has to do with the credibility, subjects should look more closely when it regards to health issues. Typically in issues that are more relevant for the subject, consumers tend to rationalize and pay closer attention to the source in order to process the information (Chesney & Su, 2010). Furthermore, in health matters,

consumers tend to look for a professional design and scientific language, when using online sources of information (Chesney & Su, 2010), as was mentioned before.

Nonetheless, the Media used in each credibility condition depends on each respondent's perceptions. In the first question of the study we randomly asked either the most or the least credible source of information for each respondent. Depending on their answer, they had the corresponding stimulus.

Three sources of information were used: pharmaceutical company's website, independent website or e-mail, in order to present a larger sample of possibilities for our respondents. Johnson & Kaye (2009) analysed the credibility online and concluded that issue-oriented websites would be considered the most credible among these three, whereas the company's website would not be seen as independent and thus generating scepticism as well as e-mails.

However, the focus of this study is not to determine the credibility of each of them, but rather to understand the impact of source credibility on consumers' purchase intention. Thus, we based our stimuli in real articles retrieved from these sources of information, but we changed the names of the products and companies used in order to avoid previous associations and better control the experimental conditions.

After choosing the source of information that they considered the most or least credible, respondents would be exposed to positive or negative information about a company, in order to serve as positive or negative associations' stimulus. Following that information, respondents were asked about the likelihood of purchasing products of that company.

In the second part of the experiment, respondents would read an article about a specific product of the same company that would oppose to the information previously given (part I). The source of information that would be used corresponded to the one selected by respondents in the first question, thus we adapt the media choice to each respondent's perceptions regarding their credibility. The objective is to determine the variation on purchase intention before this stimulus and after, which is foreseen to be dependent on source credibility. For that, here we measured again purchase intention.

Besides that, respondents were asked to answer to the 44 items that constitute the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John & Srivastava, 1999) - as was used in the first experiment - as well as to provide their demographic characteristics. It is important to mention that

the personality traits inventory was placed purposely between the first question and the experimental stimuli, in order to distract respondents' choice in that first question and avoid any eventual "consistency-bias" for the rest of the experiment.

4.3.2 Measures

This experiment has three main independent variables, two of which were manipulated, namely source credibility (high or low) and CSR associations (positive or negative) with the following information contradicting the first one. Furthermore, the personality traits were also used to comprehend respondents in terms of their different reactions regarding our experiment.

There is only a dependent variable which is purchase intention. It was measured twice for each respondent, since we intended to analyse the variation after source credibility stimulus. The moments in which we measured purchase intention were (1) after the first text referring to the CSR background of the company, and (2) after the text describing a positive or negative event regarding a product of that company. The analysis will be held considering the difference between (2) and (1), hence the variation of purchase intention.

Subjects were asked their willingness to buy products of this company in a single item but repeated in two different moments ("I would buy products of this company."), in order to measure their purchase intention associated with the two stimuli used in this experiment. This variable was measured in a scale of 1 = "Completely disagree" to 7 = "Completely agree". Furthermore, the variation of purchase intention would range from - 6 to + 6, resulting from the difference between both moments purchase intention.

In order to analyse consumers' personality differences in terms of their reactions to CSR, as was mentioned before, we used BFI-44 (John & Srivastava, 1999), which is measured in a scale of 1 = "Completely disagree" to 7 = "Completely agree" (see 0 Appendix 2 - Big Five Inventory (BFI-44) for the complete inventory used).

4.3.3 Sample

In this experiment, 199 respondents from Lisbon University Institute voluntarily participated and were randomly assigned to the different conditions. The request for participation in this study was sent via e-mail and respondents were redirected to an external link for the survey online, which was created recurring to the *Qualtrics Online*

Survey Software. Subjects' ages ranged from 17 to 71 years old (mode = 23 and mean = 29), with the majority being females (55.3%) and having finished a bachelor (49%).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Experiment I

5.1.1 Preliminary analysis

To analyse the results, it is important, first, to verify if the assumptions of parametric data hold. Since the sample size is above 30 subjects and bearing in mind the central limit theorem, we can assume that the means of each variable follow a normal distribution and, thus, the normality assumption required to perform ANOVA test holds.

Subjects responded to the study without the interference of external subjects, therefore, their responses are independent, complying with the other assumption to perform parametric tests, as is ANOVA.

Furthermore, variables are measured with 7-point Likert scales, complying with the third assumption of parametric testing (continuous and the intervals are approximately equal). Finally, the assumption of homogeneity of variance will be further analysed in the next topic, when performing each of the tests that will allow us to verify if the hypotheses formulated are accepted.

5.1.2 Hypotheses testing

Since the assumptions to perform parametric tests hold, we will be discussing the results of the hypotheses testing.

Firstly, regarding the analysis of the first hypothesis we use a linear regression method to verify if associations influence positively purchase intention, which means that they are (one of the) cause(s) of the level of purchase intention obtained.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	2.264	.211		10.722	.000
CSR Associations	.609	.045	.564	13.539	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention R ² = .318, p < .05					

Exhibit 9 - Linear Regression (H1)

Since there is only one predictor (*CSR Associations*) of *purchase intention*, the value of R² represents the simple correlation between both variables. We can say that CSR Associations account for 31.8% of the variation on purchase intention, whereas the rest is related to other variables. Furthermore, by reaching a B value of .609 (sig. < .05),

CSR Associations influence positively purchase intention, which is in line with what we predicted with the first hypothesis and, thus, it is not rejected.

Regarding hypothesis 2, we used a Factorial ANOVA in order to accept or not our predictions. There are within-subjects and between-subjects conditions (factors). Credibility varies within-subjects (high and low), whereas the factors used to differentiate respondents were previous associations as well as each of the five big personality traits. Besides that, the dependent variable analysed is purchase intention variation, calculated by making the difference between purchase intention level measured before the information about the product and after.

For purchase intention in both credibility conditions, the variances were equal, $F(1,194) = 8,091, ns$, and $F(1,194) = 3,051, ns$. Credibility did not have a significant effect on purchase intention variation, $F(1, 194) = 0.081, ns$, indicating that respondents' reactions were in general the same, whether facing a high or low credibility source. This means we reject H2.

To test the third hypothesis, we must look for differences between groups (positive vs. negative CSR associations, with contradictory information following). We verified that CSR associations and contradictory information had significant differences, $F(1,194) = 129.18, p < .05$, which means that consumers tend to respond more drastically to information that contradicts positive CSR associations than negative CSR associations (as can be seen in Exhibit 10 - Descriptive Statistics). Thus, H3 is not rejected and, specifically, we were able to verify that group 2 (negative CSR associations followed by positive information) was very lightly affected by the information released in both credibility conditions.

Descriptive Statistics				
	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Purchase intention variation (High credibility condition)	Group 1	-2.09	1.858	99
	Group 2	0.37	1.356	97
	Total	-0.87	2.040	196
Purchase intention variation (Low credibility condition)	Group 1	-2.02	2.090	99
	Group 2	0.21	2.015	97
	Total	-0.92	2.332	196

Exhibit 10 - Descriptive Statistics

In terms of personality traits, we tested the reliability of the scales and obtained high Cronbach's Alphas for the five scales (see Exhibit 11 - Personality Traits Scales - Reliability). Thus, we proceeded to clustering respondents depending on their personality traits, identifying high, average and low levels of each of the Big Five in order to analyse differences between groups.

Personality Trait Scales	Cronbach's Alpha
Extraversion	.762
Agreeableness	.677
Conscientiousness	.727
Neuroticism	.755
Openness	.804

Exhibit 11 - Personality Traits Scales - Reliability

Firstly, extraversion personality trait did not display significant differences among respondents regarding their response to the information stimuli, $F(2, 190) = 2.511$, *ns*. In fact, there was only a contrast between high and low level of extraversion, $p < .05$, but not between high and average extraversion, *ns*. Nonetheless, we verified that highly extraverts displayed higher attitude change in group 1, whereas in group 2, they were actually negatively influenced by the positive information stimulus. On the other hand, low extraverts tend to have a higher purchase intention variation in group 2, but lower in group 1, comparing with the individuals that exhibit higher levels of extraversion.

Secondly, considering agreeableness, there were no significant differences on the three levels of this personality trait, $F(2, 190) = 0.090$, *ns*. Furthermore, there was no contrast between high, average and low agreeableness traits, which means that their responses were basically similar.

Regarding neuroticism, the analysis lead to the same conclusion – no difference among different levels of neuroticism – $F(2, 190) = 0.228$, *ns*. Therefore, we verified that purchase intention variation was not affected by neuroticism of respondents.

Besides that, openness personality traits did not differ significantly in terms of purchase intention variation, $F(2, 190) = 1.927$, *ns*, as well as conscientiousness, which was also non-significant, $F(2, 190) = 0.747$, *ns*. These results, despite being somewhat surprising, are related to the fact that source credibility did not have a significant effect on subjects' responses (see Exhibit 12 – Hypotheses Results).

Hypotheses	Result
H1: Positive CSR associations will lead to a higher level of purchase intentions, than negative CSR associations.	Not rejected.
H2: High credibility source will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than a low credibility source.	Rejected.
H3: Positive CSR associations and negative information will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than negative CSR associations and positive information.	Not rejected.

Exhibit 12 - Hypotheses results

5.1.3 Discussion

The results of this experiment are not conclusive in regards to the influence of source credibility on consumers' responses to CSR information. However, it is obvious that the stimuli of positive or negative CSR associations are related to purchase intention. In fact, we verified that CSR associations influence positively purchase intention, which is in line with previous studies (eg. Klein & Dawar, 2004, Brown, 1998). Nonetheless most studies introduce several moderators, but here we were able to prove that CSR associations are responsible for 32% of the variation in purchase intention ($R^2 = .318$, $p < .05$).

It is clear that consumers value CSR in their purchase decisions, but also that it is not yet a key determinant on those decisions. On the other hand, we were able to verify that consumers tend to penalize more a company that they had previous positive CSR associations when facing a negative evaluation, than if they had negative CSR associations and were exposed to positive information about a product of the company. This means that companies should focus on developing positive CSR associations and that it is a long-term commitment that should be made, not only because negative associations are difficult to change, but also because a single negative event can drastically damage one's reputation.

Companies are facing more demanding challenges regarding their social participation and with the contribution of social networks and media in general, it is easier for their irresponsible behaviours to be reported and spread among consumers. Obviously, this will lead to very negative outcomes, even if the source of the information is not credible, as was the example of the present study. In fact, companies face a great vulnerability to rumours, since consumers feel very sensitive towards such behaviours, but not as strongly affected by positive information. Therefore, CSR should be part of the global strategy of any company. It is true that positive information has less impact than negative information, and that is why companies must be fully committed to build

a positive reputation, but mostly to maintain such socially responsible strategy and avoid any flaws.

Despite the fact that companies are easily exposed in terms of their social participation, the truth is that credibility of the source must be further explored. The results of the present experiment are contradictory to existing literature, since issue-oriented websites were seen as more credible than mailing lists (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). Nonetheless, we can theorize about what may have influenced the results we obtained.

Firstly, regarding the sample, we can argue that experienced internet users (supposedly college students are highly exposed to information online) may tend to be less sceptical about what they read online, and often do not take notice of content authors (Chesney & Su, 2010). However, as Chesney & Su (2010) reported, when related to health matters, users tend to look for professional design, scientific language and the source of information. Therefore, we can argue that the e-mail presented was somehow credible, since it was used scientific language, which contribute to the increase of persuasiveness of the message.

Furthermore, the author of the e-mail was not mentioned, and thus can be related to what McGinnies & Ward (1974) suggested – non-identification of the source of the information may lead respondents to perceive it as being highly credible. Besides that, the fact that respondents were aware that they were being part of an experiment, despite not knowing what was the objective, may have lead them to believe that all the information provided was verified and true, not doubting any of the contents of the study.

Another aspect that should be taken into account, and maybe the most important one, is that each respondent was exposed to a high and a low credibility conditions. In spite of using different products, the truth is that we believe they were influenced to maintain the responses in both stimuli. Thus, it will require further research to understand whether this was what biased the study.

Therefore, it is necessary that we further explore this issue in another experiment, described next.

5.2. Experiment II

5.2.1 Preliminary analysis

In order to apply parametric tests it is fundamental to confirm that the assumptions of parametric data are verified. As was mentioned before, these assumptions are four, namely:

- It is a *normally distributed data*, since our sample is above 30 respondents, this assumption holds;
- *Homogeneity of variance* (this assumption will be analysed in the next section, when developing the statistical tests);
- *Interval data*, the variables being used are continuous, and the difference between each point in the scales used is equal;
- *Independence*, different participants are independent, as well as their responses, hence the behaviour of one respondent do not influence other respondents' behaviour or responses.

Considering that the four assumptions are met, we may proceed with the analysis considering that it is parametric data.

5.2.2 Source credibility analysis

The first question of this experiment was fundamental to determine in which credibility condition respondents would be included, as it defined randomly if they would be answering to a high or low credibility condition. Furthermore, it would also determine which media would be used in the following parts, hence respondents would choose the media that they perceived more or less credible and they would later face questions about that same media. This means that we did not intend to focus on the media in our analysis, but rather in the construct regardless of respondents' choices. However, it is important to describe which are perceived as more or less credible, and understand if our predictions were correct regarding these options and the ones used in the first experiment. Pharmaceutical company website, independent website and e-mail are the three media chosen to cover the spectrum of credibility, as was mentioned before and will be further analysed next.

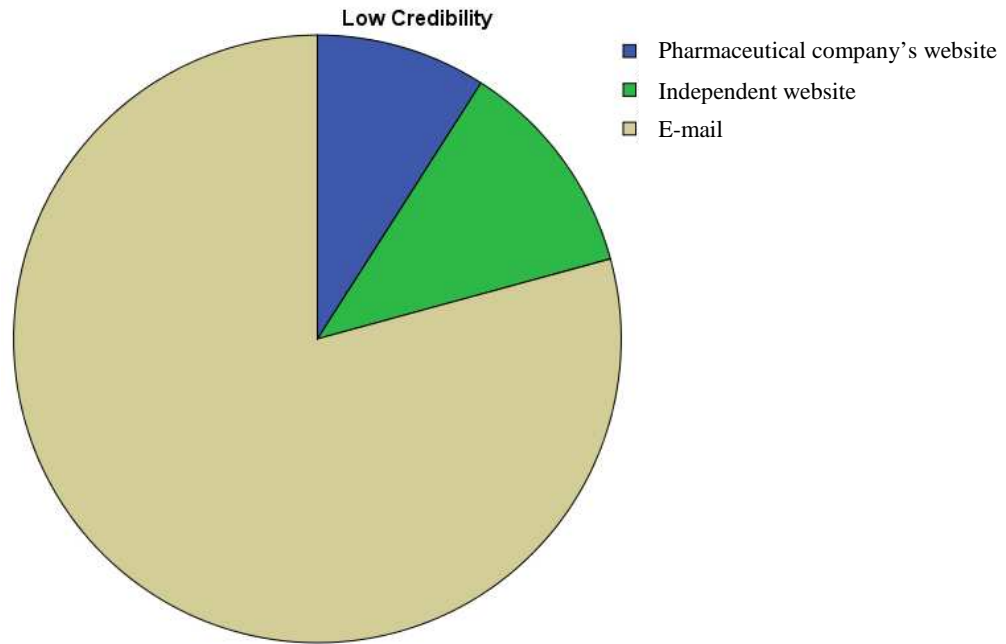


Exhibit 13 - Low credibility sources of information

As we expected, the vast majority – 79.2% – of the respondents chose e-mail as the least credible source of information from this set of possible answers, whereas the independent website (11.7%) and the company's website (9.1%) were chosen by a small number of respondents as being the least credible source of information (see Exhibit 13 - **Low credibility sources of information**). Therefore, most respondents read the e-mail condition and were probably more sceptical about the contents of the e-mail used in this experiment.

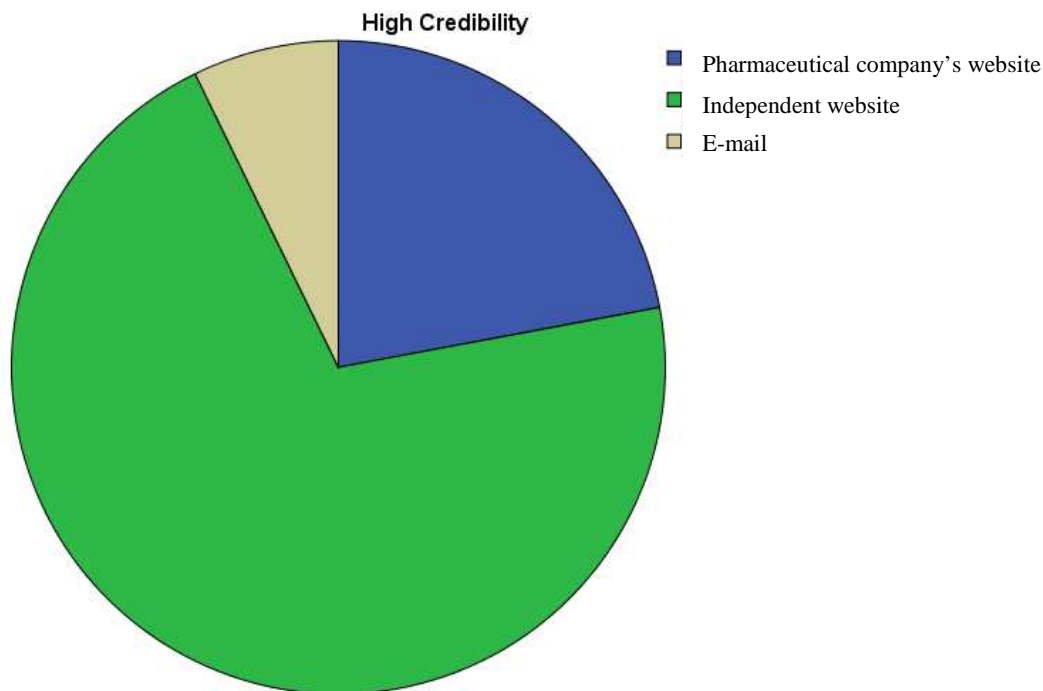


Exhibit 14 - High credibility sources of information

Considering Exhibit 14 - **High credibility sources of information**, we can conclude that the most credible source of information of these three is the independent website, which was the answer of 70.7% of the sample, whereas, the company's website was chosen by 22.1% of the respondents and, finally, e-mail was only seen as the most credible source of information for 7.2% of our sample. This finding is in accordance with the conclusions taken from the low credibility question, where e-mail was perceived as the least credible source of information.

Basically, these conclusions follow the existing literature regarding media and credibility of online sources of information (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). However, it is important to verify if there is a variation in terms of consumers' behaviour associated with these differences of credibility.

5.2.3 Hypotheses testing

The first step when analysing any database is to define the test that will be applied. In this case and because all experimental conditions are between subjects, we are going to use Factorial ANOVA to analyse more than one independent variable and one dependent variable, as was mentioned before. Therefore, firstly, a two-way independent ANOVA was conducted in order to analyse the impact of credibility and the information provided (positive or negative) on purchase intention variation.

Using the Levene's test we can verify that the assumption of parametric data about homogeneity of variances holds, $F(3,195) = 0.28, ns$, therefore, we may proceed with the analysis. In order to understand better the results, here we present the descriptive statistics of this test.

Descriptive Statistics				
<i>Dependent Variable: Variation of Purchase Intention</i>				
Credibility	First Information	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Low Credibility	Negative	0,38	1,83937	50
	Positive	-1,469	1,69684	49
	Total	-0,535	1,99137	99
High Credibility	Negative	0,74	1,61384	50
	Positive	-0,64	1,75848	50
	Total	0,05	1,81673	100
Total	Negative	0,56	1,731	100
	Positive	-1,051	1,7692	99
	Total	-0,241	1,9233	199

Exhibit 15- Descriptive Statistics

Through the exhibit presented above, it is possible to verify that in low credibility condition, when positive information is refuted by a negative one about the same company, purchase intention of respondents typically decreases 1.4684, whereas if the first information was negative followed by a low credibility positive information, the variation was very low (.38). Regarding the high credibility condition, we can see that participants in this experiment respond similarly in terms of value in both groups (positive or negative first information).

There was a significant main effect of source credibility on purchase intention variation, $F(1,195) = 5.883, p < .05, \omega^2 = .029$. This means that credibility affected consumers responses, namely low credibility sources of information tended to have a higher impact on respondents ($M = -.54, SD = 1.99$). On the other hand, high credible sources did not have such a great effect on consumers purchase intention considering their previous answers ($M = .05, SD = 1.82$). These surprising findings will be further discussed in the next section.

There was also a significant main effect of the first information provided (either positive or negative) on purchase intention variation, $F(1, 195) = 43.37, p < .05, \omega^2 = .18$. Thus, if the first information provided was negative, the impact of the following positive

information was lower in absolute terms ($M = .56$, $SD = 1.73$) than if the first information was positive and was followed by a negative information ($M = -1.05$, $SD = 1.77$).

There was a non-significant interaction effect between credibility and the first information provided, on purchase intention variation, $F(1,195) = .916$, $p = .34$, $\omega^2 = .005$.

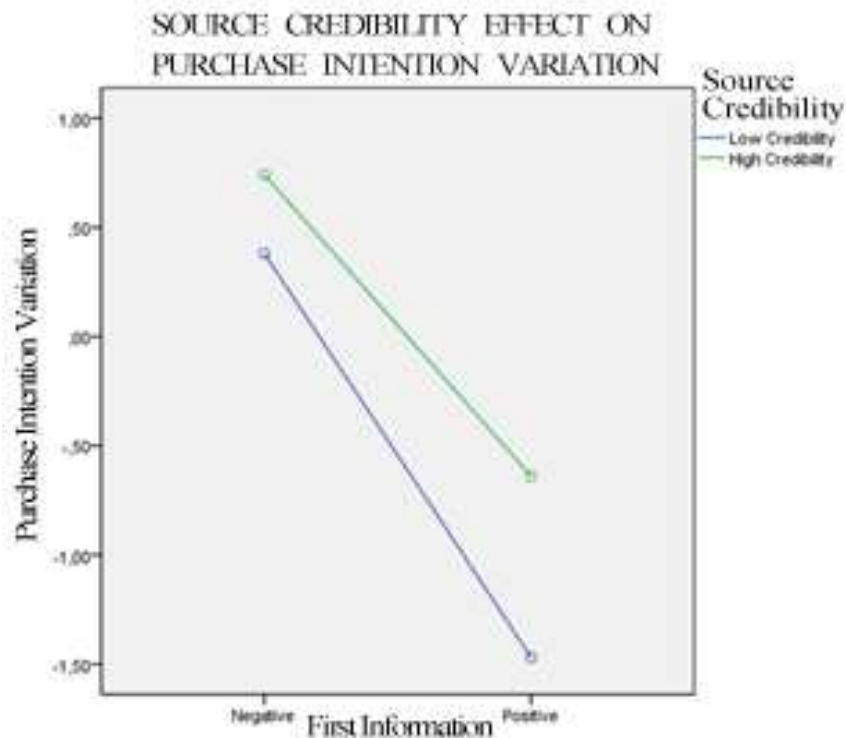


Exhibit 16 - Source credibility and First information impact on purchase intention variation

Considering Exhibit 16 - **Source credibility and First information impact on purchase intention variation**, we see that if the first information was negative, the positive information that would follow would have a higher impact if the source of the information was seen as highly credible instead of a less credibility source. Nonetheless, regarding the cases in which positive information was presented first and followed by negative information, the low credible source has a stronger impact on purchase intention, than a high credibility source.

Now, we intend to comprehend if there are any differences in terms of personality traits. Therefore, we will add another factor and perform a three-way independent ANOVA, where the third factor is each of the five personality traits – Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness. It is important to

mention that each personality trait was binned into three categories in order to differentiate the respondents, namely low, average and high scorers in each of the five personality traits. Our objective here is to see if there any differences among these three categories.

The assumption of homogeneity of variances holds, $F(11,187) = 1.05$, *ns*, and thus we shall proceed with the analysis since the four assumptions of parametric data hold. There was a non-significant effect of extraversion on purchase intention variation, $F(2, 187) = 1.17$, $p = .31$, $\omega^2 = .01$, as well as any of the interactions with the other two independent variables, which were all non-significant.

Regarding agreeableness, its main effect on purchase intention variation was also non-significant, $F(2, 187) = .024$, $p = .976$, $\omega^2 = 0$, as well as the other personality traits, namely conscientiousness, $F(2, 187) = .1$, $p = .91$, $\omega^2 = 0$; neuroticism, $F(2, 187) = .323$, $p = .724$, $\omega^2 = 0$; and openness, $F(2, 187) = .11$, $p = .89$, $\omega^2 = 0$.

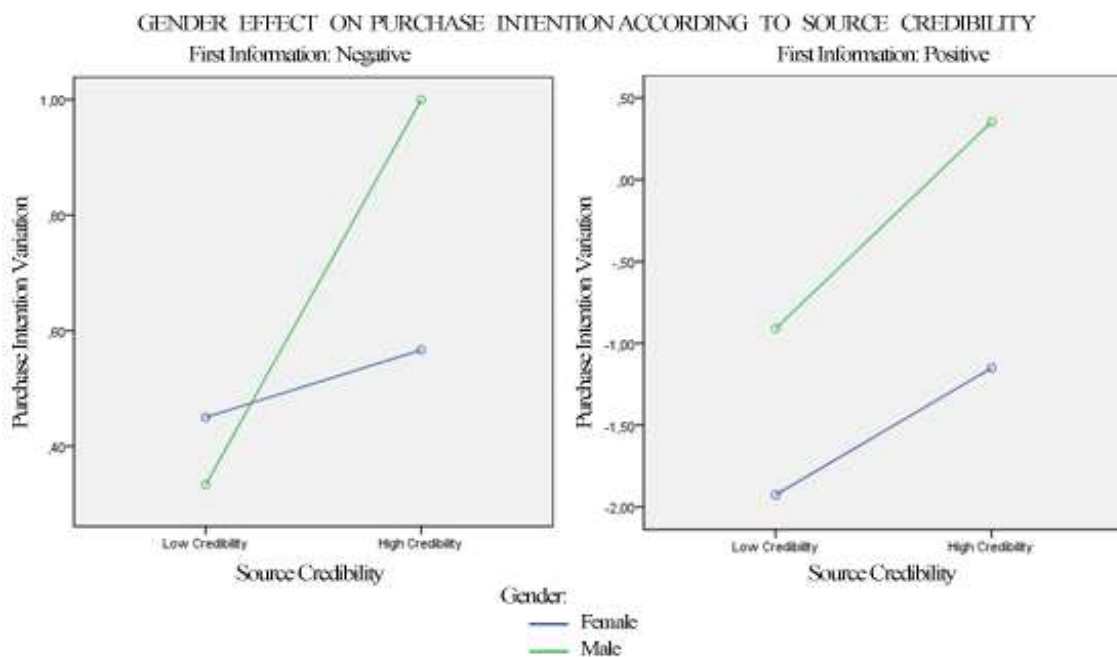


Exhibit 17 - Gender Effect on Purchase Intention Variation according to Source Credibility

Analysing gender differences, we verify that there is a significant effect of gender on purchase intention variation, $F(1, 191) = 8.38$, $p < .05$, $\omega^2 = .04$. This means that women and men react differently to these stimuli, reacting differently in terms of their variation on purchase intention. Women tend to react more strongly in absolute terms to low credibility information, regardless of if it is positive ($M = -1.93$, $SD = 1.64$) or

negative ($M = .45$, $SD = 1.19$). However, when we look at high credibility condition, when women faced a negative information followed by a positive one, they were less influenced by it ($M = .57$, $SD = 1.22$) than men ($M = 1$, $SD = 2.08$). Nonetheless, if the first information is positive and is later contradicted, then women have a higher variation ($M = -1.15$, $SD = 1.72$) than men ($M = .35$, $SD = 1.41$). Therefore, the interaction effect between gender and the first information presented in the study, on purchase intention variation was also significant, $F(1,191) = 5.06$, $p < .05$, $\omega^2 = .026$ (see Exhibit 17 - Gender Effect on Purchase Intention Variation according to Source Credibility).

In conclusion, hypothesis 3 was not rejected, whereas, hypothesis 2 was partially rejected, since we were able to find a significant effect of source credibility on purchase intention variation. High credibility source of information affected more purchase intention variation than a low credibility source when the respondents had a negative predisposition towards the company. On the other hand a low credibility source of information will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than a high credibility source, namely when there are positive predispositions towards the company.

Hypotheses	Experiment I	Experiment II
H1: Positive CSR associations will lead to a higher level of purchase intentions, than negative CSR associations.	Not rejected.	Not tested.
H2: High credibility source will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than a low credibility source.	Rejected.	Partially rejected.
H3: Positive CSR associations and negative information will lead to a higher purchase intention variation than negative CSR associations and positive information.	Not rejected.	Not rejected.

Exhibit 18 - Experiments' results

Analysing both experiments results (see Exhibit 18 - Experiments' results), we can verify that H3 was not rejected in both, confirming our predictions, whereas, the second hypothesis was rejected in the first experiment but only partially rejected in the second one. Now, it is important to discuss the implications of these results. That is what is proposed in the following section.

5.2.4 Discussion

Bearing in mind that the objective of this second experiment was to improve the design of the first study in order to find out if there was really a difference in terms of both credibility conditions, we will explore our findings here. We were able to find that

credibility influence consumers when they face contradictory information about a certain pharmaceutical product. However, this difference was not the one we expected. In fact, we found out that low credibility sources of information, actually, had a higher impact on respondents' purchase intention, specifically when the information they provided was negative and followed positive information.

The reasons for this conclusion may be related to the fact that if the arguments of the high credibility source are weak, it can be damaging for the impact in purchase intention (Tormala, Briñol, & Petty, 2006). Furthermore, there are other aspects that should be considered. Firstly, the fact that the message of high credibility sources often incorporates technical language that is not understood by consumers is a barrier for it to impact consumers' decisions. Secondly, the language used in the three of them is typically different, provoking different reactions on consumers. Most respondents were exposed to the independent website as high credibility source of information, whereas, regarding low credibility condition was the e-mail that was chosen by the majority of respondents. The article of an independent website used did not have a message of panic nor extremely drastic about the product in analysis, whereas, in the e-mail, the language used was more common and the message is written in a more dramatic way, leading people to panic. Both messages are written for different purposes and thus have different outcomes. The first one is focused on a very objective approach and intends solely to inform, but e-mails are typically a great way of spreading rumours because they are written in a persuasive and alarming way. In fact, and especially in matters such as health and pharmaceutical products, consumers are more conservative and cautious, because the consequences of purchasing and consuming a certain product can be more severe in terms of their lives.

Considering both of these aspects – language and objective of information – these findings may seem less surprising. Other studies found the same conclusions, namely referring to the credibility as a persuasive liability in specific cases. Sternthal, Dholakia, & Leavitt (1978) reported that the initial opinion about a subject can lead to different reactions to source credibility. They found that when the issue was one towards which respondents had a positive initial disposition, low credibility source produced greater persuasion than a high credibility source of information (Sternthal, Dholakia, & Leavitt, 1978). On the other hand, they also discovered that when the initial disposition was negative, high credibility sources of information would have a greater impact on

respondents' reactions (Sternthal, Dholakia, & Leavitt, 1978). The findings of their study are aligned with the results of our experiment, since respondents were more influenced by low credibility stimulus if their previous opinion was positive than negative. Furthermore, when the negative information was presented before and followed by positive information, it was the high credibility source that would influence more respondents.

Besides that, we verified as well that positive associations are easier to change than negative associations. Thus, a single negative event can be easily spread through online sources of information and will likely have a dramatic effect on companies' performance, since consumers will be highly affected by those kinds of events. On the other hand, it is not easy to change an existing negative opinion about a company and it takes time and high credibility sources of information are more effective in persuading consumers. Nonetheless, persuasion is still very low, because consumers tend to feel sceptical about companies.

Regarding personality traits and demographic characteristics, we did not find any relationship between personality traits and our model, but in terms of gender, it did have a significant relationship with purchase intention variation. This means that women and men react differently to source credibility and CSR. Women tend to have a stronger reaction when their positive initial disposition is contradicted by a negative event, but they are less influenced when the initial information provided is negative. It is harder to change a negative opinion in women than in men.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Research Contributions

Considering existing literature regarding CSR and consumer behaviour, the present experimental studies allowed us to add an important variable to the analysis already being developed by other researchers. Source credibility proves to be a relevant aspect when studying consumers' reactions to CSR initiatives. The Media are growing in terms of their effect on consumers' decisions, specifically online media and social networks. The increasing flow of information that consumers are exposed to is one of the causes for consumers to try to filter what they read and see. Source credibility is often the factor used to make this differentiation; hence it is so important for companies to consider its impact on consumers' reactions.

Regarding personality traits, we were unable to find significant differences between subjects according to their personality traits, but we believe that it may be related to the personality traits inventory used in these studies. We suggest further research regarding this topic, and the creation of a personality traits inventory adapted to marketing and consumer behaviour research.

In the end, our studies allowed us to confirm some of the findings other researchers were able to reach, regarding CSR associations and the fact that positive associations are easier to change than negative associations; but also expand the spectrum of variables to be considered regarding CSR and consumer behaviour. Nonetheless, we hope our work will motivate other researchers to improve and test our conclusions, in order to increase and improve the knowledge about consumers and CSR.

6.2. Managerial Implications

The main findings of the experiments developed are related to the importance of a good conduct in terms of corporate social responsibility and the influence of source credibility on consumers' reactions.

We verified that any negative message, even from a low credibility source of information, can have dramatic effects on consumers, specifically on their purchase intention, leading to its decreasing. This happens if consumers previously had positive associations towards the company. On the other hand, if those associations were negative, it would be extremely difficult to change that image. Purchase intention

decrease more in case of negative information contradicting positive associations towards the company, than the opposite – if they face positive information contradicting negative associations. In this case, it is the highly credible source of information that will have a greater impact on consumers, but still, that impact will be reduced.

This conclusion is aligned with most of CSR and consumer behaviour studies, stating that positive images are easier to change than negative ones, even if the information is from a highly credible source. It only takes a single error, or even a rumour to have consequences in consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, this is also related to the new technologies and the increasing usage of the internet. Experienced users of the internet tend to trust more what they read online than non-frequent users of the internet, specifically when trying to distinguish the information that has hidden interests and the kind of information that is independent and sometimes even without any author identified (Chesney & Su, 2010).

Therefore, it is fundamental that companies invest in CSR, creating initiatives but also avoiding any kind of mistake in this area, because prevention is more effective than correcting mistakes, as was mentioned before. It is important to be conscious about the impact those errors can have in the company. Here we were able to prove that it decreases purchase intention, which ultimately will impact on the global financial performance of the company. Furthermore, the media can be both the most powerful ally and the most terrible enemy a company can have. It can improve company's reputation but also severely damages it. That is why a communication policy is so important, besides a CSR strategy aligned with consumers' expectations.

In fact, companies must engage in a long term strategy of corporate citizenship and promote consumer socially responsible buying as well. Companies can and should play a more active role in building a sustainable economy. As was mentioned before, solely if the environment/community in which companies live is sustainable, can the companies survive and profit. Corporate social responsibility is a tool that companies cannot forget or underestimate on their future returns, because only those that value and stimulate social responsible participation can succeed.

Despite the differences between females and males, we cannot say that companies whose target market is mainly women should be more careful than if their target market was men. In fact, we believe that CSR strategy should be defined as a brand builder not

only for companies' current market, but to expand their image and reputation across different markets.

Consumers live in communities and that is why it is so important to build a good image across those communities, because consumers are influenced in their attitudes and decisions by the environment in which they live. Furthermore, the internet and social networks have been allowing consumers to share their evaluations about companies as well as to share their complaints about services or products. Thus, companies are in constant vulnerability regarding their activities, but they should also be in constant alert towards what can be a damaging event for their reputation and ultimately to their financial performance.

To sum up, we were able to prove that source credibility has a significant impact on consumers' responses to contradicting information regarding companies' CSR activities. Through the experimental studies developed, we also emphasize the importance of a corporate social responsible global strategy in which the objective is to improve and maintain corporate reputation intact, avoiding at any cost any kind of mistake and when managing rumours or negative information. It also enlightens the fact that nowadays companies are extremely vulnerable to the internet and to rumours, which stresses that being alert and being proactive is fundamental for any company to succeed in the market place.

6.3. Limitations and future research

Every study has inherent some level of error and its own limitations, due to the conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher. The two experiments performed are no exception.

In the first experiment, we used real companies (Kellogg and Danone), which means that respondents may be influenced by previous associations they may hold towards the companies used. However, this choice of using real companies also has an increased external validity, since the issues tested are felt to be closer to the respondents, and, therefore, they feel more involved on the experiment. Furthermore, each company also had its own credibility which may have been confused with media credibility and could be an interesting study to develop in the future, i.e. to comprehend the different impact of company's credibility and media credibility on consumers' intentions.

On the other hand, the first study also had a design that could be questionable, since respondents were exposed to two experimental conditions and could tend to respond similarly to both conditions, biasing the study.

In the second experiment we used fictitious companies; therefore, it is required further research to verify the external validity of our findings as well as comprehend if the significant impact of source credibility was not solely obtained when using fictitious companies.

Moreover, regarding personality traits, we believe that it is an area that needs further exploration by researchers, in order to understand consumers from a more psychological perspective. Before they are consumers, they are human beings with specific personality traits. Thus, the creation of a personality traits inventory for marketing and consumer research is needed. This can be one of the reasons for us not finding a significant relationship with purchase intention, because we used a generic personality traits inventory.

As the dependent variable used in the present experiments is an intentions' variable, it is required further research to comprehend if those intentions will materialize in behaviours or not. This is associated with the fact that respondents may have had a social-desirable bias effect and, ultimately, the key criteria for consumers' purchase decision were absent, such as price. It would be interesting to test these issues in association with other purchase decision factors.

We hope that the present dissertation will serve as a motivator for further research on the variables we added, i.e. source credibility and personality traits, with the final objective of developing our knowledge about consumers' responses to CSR initiatives.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 - How are Portuguese companies performing in CSR?

Gjolberg (2009) analysed and ranked several countries in terms of their social responsibility practices according to the requirements to figure in sustainability indexes such as DJSI, FTSE4Good, and others. Despite all the improvement, throughout the recent years, Portugal, as well as the other Mediterranean countries, were identified as laggards in terms of the most demanding CSR initiatives (hard requirements and results oriented, e.g. DJSI). However, one of the reasons that was mentioned to justify this result was that the application for this indexes implies a registration in English, which is not these countries' native language and may act as a barrier for them to apply.

The growing demand for information that is not financial in nature has lead companies to present a CSR report to all the stakeholders more often. Hence, the number of sustainability or CSR reports is growing in Portugal (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues, 2006).

In 2001, some of the most known companies in Portugal (e.g. Cimpor, Soporcel, Sonae) created the *BCSD Portugal* which represents the WBCSD - World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and is a non-profit organization that has reached 100 members and intends to promote the best practices in terms of sustainability and CSR among the Portuguese companies (BCSD Portugal).

EDP – Energias de Portugal is one of the companies that has been playing a very active role in the social field, with initiatives such as *Twist – A Tua Energia Faz a Diferença*, associated with *Sair da Casca*. This initiative consists in conferences, workshops and surveys for both high-school students and the schools, in order to promote a change in their behaviour in terms of sustainability. This project was applied in 203 schools in 2009, and through the reports provided by the students and professors of each school, it was possible to determine the three schools that had the best performance promoting and changing the habits of the scholar community, and these three wan a €100,000 prize to be applied in the winners' sustainability initiatives (BCSD Portugal, 2010).

Abreu Advogados (AB) is a law firm that invests greatly in voluntary work performed by its lawyers. In fact, in 2009 and 2010, around 100 lawyers spent more than 2000 hours executing voluntary work, both as defending clients at zero remuneration as well

as participating in conferences for schools and other initiatives with the objective to make the law accessible and understandable for everyone – *AB4All* (BCSD Portugal, 2010). It is important also to mention that AB is the only Portuguese law company to be distinguished with the *Financial Times Innovative Lawyers Report* (TOP 15) (Abreu Advogados é a única sociedade portuguesa no Top 15 do "Financial Times Innovative Lawyers Report").

Considering the examples provided, and despite the comparison with the other countries not being positive, Portugal has been improving its performance in terms of the companies' investment and participation in socially responsible and sustainable initiatives.

Appendix 2 - Big Five Inventory (BFI-44)

The items used in the survey were collected online from a translated version of the BFI-44 available at the website of the author (John, Berkeley Personality Lab). The dimensions associated with each item are referred in the next exhibit, in which we provide the English and Portuguese version of the BFI-44, both retrieved from the website of the author.

English	Portuguese	Dimension (+/-)	Dimension
Am the life of the party.	Sou a alegria da festa.	1+	Extraversion
Feel little concern for others.	Preocupo-me pouco com os outros.	2-	Agreeableness
Am always prepared.	Estou sempre preparado.	3+	Conscientiousness
Get stressed out easily.	Fico irritado facilmente.	4-	Emotional Stability
Have a rich vocabulary.	Tenho um vocabulário rico.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Don't talk a lot.	Não falo muito.	1-	Extraversion
Am interested in people.	Interesso-me pelas pessoas.	2+	Agreeableness
Leave my belongings around.	Deixo as minhas coisas espalhadas.	3-	Conscientiousness
Am relaxed most of the time.	Estou calmo a maioria do tempo.	4+	Emotional Stability
Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	Tenho dificuldade de compreender ideias abstratas.	5-	Intellect/Imagination
Feel comfortable around people.	Sinto-me confortável junto de outras pessoas.	1+	Extraversion
Insult people.	Insulto pessoas.	2-	Agreeableness
Pay attention to details.	Tomo atenção aos detalhes.	3+	Conscientiousness
Worry about things.	Preocupo-me com as coisas.	4-	Emotional Stability
Have a vivid imagination.	Tenho uma imaginação vívida.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Keep in the background.	Mantenho-me atrás dos outros.	1-	Extraversion
Sympathize with others' feelings.	Sinto compaixão pelos sentimentos das outras pessoas.	2+	Agreeableness
Make a mess of things.	Desarrumo as coisas.	3-	Conscientiousness

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Seldom feel blue.	Raramente me sinto triste.	4+	Emotional Stability
Am not interested in abstract ideas.	Não me interesso por ideias abstratas.	5-	Intellect/Imagination
Start conversations.	Sou eu que inicio as conversas.	1+	Extraversion
Am not interested in other people's problems.	Não me interesso pelos problemas das outras pessoas.	2-	Agreeableness
Get chores done right away.	Faço as minhas tarefas o mais rapidamente possível.	3+	Conscientiousness
Am easily disturbed.	Sou facilmente incomodado.	4-	Emotional Stability
Have excellent ideas.	Tenho ideias excelentes.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Have little to say.	Tenho pouco a dizer.	1-	Extraversion
Have a soft heart.	Tenho um coração mole.	2+	Agreeableness
Often forget to put things back in their proper place.	Esqueço-me frequentemente de colocar as coisas de volta no sítio delas.	3-	Conscientiousness
Get upset easily.	Chateio-me facilmente.	4-	Emotional Stability
Do not have a good imagination.	Não tenho uma boa imaginação.	5-	Intellect/Imagination
Talk to a lot of different people at parties.	Falo com muitas pessoas em festas.	1+	Extraversion
Am not really interested in others.	Não estou mesmo interessado nos outros.	2-	Agreeableness
Like order.	Gosto de ordem.	3+	Conscientiousness
Change my mood a lot.	Mudo muito facilmente de humor.	4-	Emotional Stability
Am quick to understand things.	Sou rápido a compreender as coisas.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Don't like to draw attention to myself.	Não gosto de chamar a atenção para mim mesmo.	1-	Extraversion
Take time out for others.	Arranjo tempo para os outros.	2+	Agreeableness
Shirk my duties.	Tento escapar aos meus deveres.	3-	Conscientiousness
Have frequent mood swings.	Tenho frequentemente mudanças de humor.	4-	Emotional Stability
Use difficult words.	Uso palavras difíceis.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Don't mind being the center of attention.	Não me importo de ser o centro das atenções.	1+	Extraversion
Feel others' emotions.	Sinto as emoções dos outros.	2+	Agreeableness
Follow a schedule.	Sigo um horário.	3+	Conscientiousness
Get irritated easily.	Fico irritado facilmente.	4-	Emotional Stability
Spend time reflecting on things.	Passo tempo a refletir nas coisas.	5+	Intellect/Imagination
Am quiet around strangers.	Sou tímido quando estou com estranhos.	1-	Extraversion
Make people feel at ease.	Faço as pessoas sentirem-se à vontade.	2+	Agreeableness
Am exacting in my work.	Sou exigente no meu trabalho.	3+	Conscientiousness
Often feel blue.	Frequentemente, sinto-me triste.	4-	Emotional Stability
Am full of ideas.	Tenho imensas ideias.	5+	Intellect/Imagination

Appendix 3 - First Experiment

Appendix 3.1. Kellogg

Positive information followed by negative information (high credibility)

	English	Portuguese
Part I	<p>In this first part, we will provide information about a well-known company that produces cereals, Kellogg Company.</p> <p>The Kellogg's Cereals are one of the leader brands in breakfast cereals, providing several different products, such as Kellogg's Special K and All Bran. This multinational corporation has been developing a very active role in terms of protecting the environment and investing in policies that allow the improvement of the general life conditions of the society. The company is above its competitors regarding their restrictions to the emissions of polluted substances to the atmosphere, having already reached very high levels of efficiency and reduced levels of pollution, from water and air pollution to solo's pollution.</p> <p>For its constant search for better products in order to follow consumers' growing concerns about their health and food, Kellogg's is known in the market as a role model, showing a great concern about nutrition issues, as well as the promotion of healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Besides that, the company has also invested in their human resources practices and policies, trying to provide several benefits to their employees, in order to value and motive them, as well as promoting the diversity in terms of their employees and trying to have a responsible management of the supply chain.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the activities developed by the company, it is seen as concerned with the environment and the society in general, as well as with the sustainability of its activities.</p>	<p>Nesta primeira parte, fornecemos informação relativa a uma conhecida empresa de produção de cereais, a <i>Kellogg Company</i>.</p> <p>A <i>Kellogg's</i> é uma das marcas líderes no mercado nacional de cereais de pequeno-almoço, tendo vários produtos como o <i>Kellogg's Special K</i> e o <i>All Bran</i>. Esta multinacional tem vindo a desempenhar um papel muito ativo no que toca à proteção do ambiente e investindo em políticas que permitam melhorar as condições de vida da sociedade em geral. A empresa está acima dos seus concorrentes em termos de restrições às emissões de gases poluentes para a atmosfera, tendo alcançado níveis de eficiência muito elevados e valores de poluição reduzidos tanto ao nível de poluição das águas, ar e solos.</p> <p>Pela sua constante busca de melhores produtos no sentido de acompanhar a crescente preocupação dos consumidores com as questões de alimentação e saúde, a <i>Kellogg's</i> é reconhecida no mercado como marca de referência. Havendo, assim, uma elevada preocupação com questões de nutrição, bem como com a promoção de estilos de vida saudáveis.</p> <p>A empresa tem ainda particular atenção no que toca às suas práticas de recursos humanos, procurando proporcionar aos seus colaboradores diversas regalias no sentido de os valorizar e motivar, inclusivamente promovendo a diversidade junto dos seus colaboradores, bem como procurando fazer uma correta gestão da cadeia de abastecimento.</p> <p>Tendo em conta as atividades desenvolvidas pela empresa, ela é, no geral, encarada como preocupada com o seu meio envolvente e com a sustentabilidade das suas atividades no longo prazo.</p>
Part II	<p>The following data was retrieved from the north-American website GoodGuide.com, in which a team of specialists analyses daily products according to very strict evaluation criteria, in order to provide the most credible and right information regarding the environmental and health impacts as well as impact towards the society of the production and consume of those products.</p> <p>The specialists that constitute the GoodGuide team are led by Bill Pease (specialist in chemical risk evaluation and creator of the greater source of information of pollution - scorecard.org) and include people with degrees in environmental and chemical engineering, as well as nutrition and sociology. The process of creation of the classifications of each product or company bears in</p>	<p>Os dados seguintes foram retirados do <i>website</i> norte-americano <i>GoodGuide.com</i>, em que uma equipa de especialistas analisa diariamente produtos de acordo com critérios de avaliação muito rígidos, por forma a proporcionar aos consumidores a informação mais credível e acertada acerca dos impactos na saúde, no ambiente e para a sociedade da produção e consumo destes produtos.</p> <p>Os especialistas que compõem a equipa do <i>GoodGuide</i> são liderados por Bill Pease (especialista em avaliação de risco químico e criador da maior fonte de informação de poluição, scorecard.org) e têm formações nas áreas de engenharia ambiental, química, nutrição e sociologia. O processo de criação das classificações de cada produto ou empresa é realizado tendo em conta as complexas informações que por</p>

mind the complex information that is retrieved and analysed by the team, in order to make them accessible to all consumers. Around 100,000 products have already been analysed by this team.

Now pay attention to the information regarding Corn Flakes product from Kellogg Company and answer to the question that is asked subsequently. We refer the classification in the ranking of the most health products that are more active in protecting the environment and the society in general. These ratings range from 1 to 10, in which 10 represents the best performance in the three criteria.

Average evaluation of the product: 2 pts (in 10)

Impact on health: 2 pts (in 10)

Includes high levels of sugar which are related to the obesity risk, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Environment: 2,7 pts (in 10)

Comparing the company with its competitors, it has a lot to improve regarding the emission of polluted substances.

Society: 1,3 pts (in 10)

It does not display characteristics that contribute to health, security and well-being of its consumers.

eles são recolhidas e analisadas, por forma a torná-las mais acessíveis a todos os consumidores. Quase 100,000 produtos já foram analisados por esta equipa.

Tenha agora em atenção a informação relativa ao produto *Corn Flakes* da *Kellogg Company* e responda à questão que é colocada em seguida. Fazemos referência à classificação no ranking dos produtos mais saudáveis, que mais protegem o ambiente e a sociedade. Estes valores estão contidos numa escala que vai de 1 a 10, sendo que o 10 representa o melhor desempenho nos três critérios de avaliação.

Avaliação média do produto: 2 pts (em 10)

Benefícios para a saúde: 2 pts (em 10)

Contém elevados níveis de açúcar que estão associados com risco de obesidade, diabetes e doenças cardiovasculares.

Proteção do ambiente: 2,7 pts (em 10)

Comparativamente com os concorrentes, a empresa tem muito a melhorar no que toca à emissão de gases poluentes.

Preocupações sociais: 1,3 pts (em 10)

Não evidencia características que contribuam para a saúde, segurança e bem-estar dos consumidores.

Negative information followed by positive information (high credibility)

	English	Portuguese
Part I	<p>In this first part, we will provide information about a well-known company that produces cereals, Kellogg Company.</p> <p>The Kellogg's Cereals are one of the leader brands in breakfast cereals, providing several different products, such as Kellogg's Special K and All Bran.</p> <p>Recently, the company put in practice a marketing campaign that aims to provide breakfasts for free to 1 million of children in the school year of 2012/2013, trying to reduce the number of children that do not usually take their breakfast. For that, it suggests that the American take a picture of their breakfasts and upload it to the website created for this purpose.</p> <p>From these free breakfasts, Kellogg Company will use products with high level of sugar, being above of the average daily adequate quantity of sugar for na adult and, consequently, even more excessive for children. Therefore, the company does not promote healthy lifestyles e displays a lack of concern with the health of their consumers. Thus, we can say that Kellogg is not being able to follow the more demanding expectations of consumers regarding food habits.</p> <p>Kellogg Company developed 4 years ago another marketing campaign in which it promotes the fact that its cereals allowed students to be more focused during classes. However, as the company's R&D department was not able to prove this effect, Kellogg was obliged to take the ad out of the media.</p>	<p>Nesta primeira parte, fornecemos informação relativa a uma conhecida empresa de produção de cereais, a <i>Kellogg Company</i>.</p> <p>A <i>Kellogg's</i> é uma das marcas líderes no mercado nacional de cereais de pequeno-almoço, tendo vários produtos como o <i>Kellogg's Special K</i> e o <i>All Bran</i>.</p> <p>Recentemente a empresa colocou em prática uma campanha de marketing que visa proporcionar pequenos-almoços gratuitos a 1 milhão de crianças no ano letivo de 2012/2013, tentando reduzir o número de crianças que não tem o hábito de tomar o pequeno-almoço. Para isso, propõe aos americanos que tirem uma fotografia aos seus pequenos-almoços e a coloquem num <i>website</i> criado para o efeito.</p> <p>Destes pequenos-almoços oferecidos, a <i>Kellogg</i> usará produtos de elevado teor de açúcar, sendo muito superior à quantidade diária adequada a um adulto e, consequentemente, ainda mais excessiva para crianças, pelo que a empresa não aposta na promoção de estilos de vida saudáveis e revela pouca preocupação com a saúde dos seus consumidores. Assim, podemos dizer que a <i>Kellogg</i> não tem sido capaz de acompanhar as mais elevadas exigências dos consumidores em relação aos seus hábitos de alimentação.</p> <p>Neste contexto, a <i>Kellogg</i> desenvolveu há 4 anos uma outra campanha de marketing em que promovia o facto de os seus cereais permitirem estar mais atentos e alerta nas aulas para os estudantes que os consumissem. Contudo, como o departamento de investigação da empresa não foi capaz de provar esta sua pretensão, a <i>Kellogg</i> foi obrigada a retirar o anúncio das televisões.</p>
Part II	<p>The following data was retrieved from the north-American website GoodGuide.com, in which a team of specialists analyses on a daily basis products according to very strict evaluation criteria, in order to provide the most credible and right information regarding the environmental and health impacts as well as impact towards the society of the production and consume of those products.</p> <p>The specialists that constitute the GoodGuide team are leded by Bill Pease (specialist in chemical risk evaluation and creator of the greater source of information of pollution - scorecard.org) and include people with degree in environmental and chemical engineering, as well as nutrition and sociology. The process of creation of the classifications of each product or company bears in mind the complex information that is retrieved and analysed by the team, in order to make them accessible to all consumers. Around 100,000 products have already</p>	<p>Os dados seguintes foram retirados do <i>website</i> norte-americano <i>GoodGuide.com</i>, em que uma equipa de especialistas analisa diariamente produtos de acordo com critérios de avaliação muito rígidos, por forma a proporcionar aos consumidores a informação mais credível e acertada acerca dos impactos na saúde, no ambiente e para a sociedade da produção e consumo destes produtos.</p> <p>Os especialistas que compõem a equipa do <i>GoodGuide</i> são liderados por Bill Pease (especialista em avaliação de risco químico e criador da maior fonte de informação de poluição, <i>scorecard.org</i>) e têm formações nas áreas de engenharia ambiental, química, nutrição e sociologia. O processo de criação das classificações de cada produto ou empresa é realizado tendo em conta as complexas informações que por eles são recolhidas e analisadas, por forma a torná-las mais acessíveis a todos os consumidores. Quase 100,000 produtos já foram analisados por esta</p>

been analysed by this team.

Now pay attention to the information regarding Corn Flakes product from Kellogg Company and answer to the question that is asked subsequently. We refer the classification in the ranking of the most health products that are more active in protecting the environment and the society in general. These ratings range from 1 to 10, in which 10 represents the best performance in the three criteria.

Average Evaluation of the Product: 8,1 pts (in 10)

Impact on health: 7,5 pts (in 10)

Includes a high nutritional level, despite the moderate quantity of calories.

Environment: 8,7 pts (in 10)

Comparing the company with its competitors, the company has a very good performance regarding the reduction of the emission of polluted substances.

Society: 8,1 pts (in 10)

It displays transparency in the release of information about the initiatives it develops in the social field.

equipa.

Tenha agora em atenção a informação relativa ao produto *Corn Flakes* da *Kellogg Company* e responda à questão que é colocada em seguida. Fazemos referência à classificação no ranking dos produtos mais saudáveis, que mais protegem o ambiente e a sociedade. Estes valores estão contidos numa escala que vai de 1 a 10, sendo que o 10 representa o melhor desempenho nos três critérios de avaliação.

Avaliação média do produto: 8,1 pts (em 10)

Benefícios para a saúde: 7,5 pts (em 10)

Contém um elevado valor nutritivo, apesar da quantidade moderada de calorias.

Proteção do ambiente: 8,7 pts (em 10)

Comparativamente com os concorrentes, a empresa tem uma muito boa performance no que toca à redução da emissão de gases poluentes.

Preocupações sociais: 8,1 pts (em 10)

Evidencia práticas de transparência na divulgação das suas iniciativas no campo social.

Appendix 3.2. Danone

Positive information followed by negative information (low credibility)

	English	Portuguese
Part I	<p>Danone is one of the most well-known lacteous companies, working in our country for many years now. One of the products it commercializes are Corpos Danone and Activia yogurts.</p> <p>The corporate social responsibility strategy of the company is based in two pillars: employees (internal) and people (external). In the last few years the company has invested in the working conditions of its employees, trying to promote the balance between professional and personal life and providing vaccination campaigns, free healthy breakfasts for its employees and activities specially dedicated to the children of the employees on special occasions.</p> <p>In the external pillar, Danone has special concern for children, with the objective of socially integrate disadvantaged children and young people. For this purpose, Danone integrates GRACE association, which aims to stimulate and promote the</p>	<p>A <i>Danone</i> é uma das mais conhecidas empresas ao nível dos produtos lácteos, operando no nosso país há vários anos. Entre os produtos que comercializa estão os iogurtes <i>Corpos Danone</i> e <i>Activia</i>.</p> <p>A estratégia de responsabilidade social da empresa assenta em duas vertentes: colaboradores (interna) e pessoas, em particular as crianças (externa). Nos últimos anos a empresa tem vindo a fazer um investimento nas condições de trabalho dos seus colaboradores, procurando promover o equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e a vida pessoal, bem como proporcionando campanhas de vacinação, pequenos-almoços saudáveis gratuitos para todos os colaboradores e atividades direcionadas para os filhos dos colaboradores em ocasiões especiais.</p> <p>Na vertente externa, a <i>Danone</i> tem particular preocupação com as crianças, com o objetivo de integrar socialmente as crianças e jovens mais carenciados. Para o efeito, integra a associação <i>GRACE</i>, em que em conjunto com outros associados</p>

<p>implementation of socially responsible business models. Besides that, it also develops several initiatives with young people that live in foster homes, thus promoting the voluntary social participation of its employees.</p> <p>In the external pillar, Danone has an employability protocol with CAIS, which has the objective of getting employees to give logistical support to the project Danone Nations Cup, in exchange for better financial conditions for these people during the period of the project.</p>	<p>visa sensibilizar a implementação de modelos de gestão empresarial socialmente responsáveis. Para além disso, desenvolve também várias iniciativas com jovens pertencentes a diversas instituições de acolhimento, promovendo, assim, o voluntariado social junto dos seus colaboradores.</p> <p>Ainda na vertente externa, a <i>Danone</i> tem um protocolo de empregabilidade com a <i>CAIS</i>, cujo objetivo é obter colaboradores para darem apoio logístico ao projeto <i>Danone Nations Cup</i>, em que, durante esse período, a empresa assegura a essas pessoas melhores condições financeiras.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Part II</p> <p>The following data was retrieved from an e-mail that has been circulating around recently and whose author was not identified. It analyses the properties of the Activia Yogurts from Danone. Read the following text and answer the question below.</p> <p><u>After all, what is Activia? What are the bacilos DanRegularis?</u></p> <p>"Bifidobacterium animalis is an anaerobic bacterium found inside the bowels of big animals, including humans."</p> <p>How would we obtain the popular DanRegularis then?</p> <p>NO, you are not wrong. They come from human faeces!! YES, YES AND YES!!!!</p> <p>But the absurdity doesn't stop there.</p> <p>A lot of companies have tried to register specific subspecies as a marketing technique, renaming these subspecies with pseudoscientific names.</p> <p>Danone (Dannon) registered DN 173.010, and commercializes the organism as: Bifidus Digestum (United Kingdom), Bifidus Regularis (USA and Mexico), Bifidobacterium Lactis or B.L. Regularis (Canada), DanRegularis (Brazil) and Bifidus Artiregularis (Argentina, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Russia and Spain). Scientifically, the name of this is Bifidobacterium animalis subsp.animalis, strain DN 173.010</p> <p>The reason why the lacteous drink Activia helps digest is because the bacterium added by Danone irritates more the intestinal mucosa, and when they come in contact, it tries to expel the faeces as fast as possible.</p> <p>Probiotics, they say... How much longer are we going to be naive and blindly believe in ads and marketing campaigns?</p>	<p>Os dados seguintes foram retirados de um e-mail que recentemente circulou por um número alargado de pessoas e cuja origem não foi apurada. Trata-se da avaliação das propriedades dos iogurtes <i>Activia</i> da <i>Danone</i>. Leia o texto que se segue e responda à pergunta que colocamos posteriormente.</p> <p><u>Afinal, o que é Activia? O que são os bacilos DanRegularis?</u></p> <p>"Bifidobacterium animalis é uma bactéria anaeróbica gram-positiva encontrada nos intestinos de animais de grande porte, inclusive nos humanos."</p> <p><u>Qual seria então a fonte para se obter o famoso DanRegularis?</u></p> <p>NÃO, você não está enganado. São as FEZES HUMANAS!!, SIM, SIM E SIM!!!</p> <p>Mas o absurdo não para aí.</p> <p>Muitas empresas têm tentado registar subespécies específicas como uma técnica de marketing, renomeando estas subespécies com rótulos pseudo-científicos.</p> <p>A Danone (Dannon) protocolou como marca registada a cepa DN 173.010, e comercializa o organismo nomeando-o de: Bifidus Digestum (Reino Unido), Bifidus Regularis (EUA e México), Bifidobacterium Lactis ou B.L. Regularis (Canadá), DanRegularis (Brasil) e Bifidus Artiregularis (Argentina, Áustria, Bulgária, Chile, Alemanha, Itália, Irlanda, Roménia, Rússia e Espanha). Cientificamente, o nome correcto desta cepa é Bifidobacterium animalis subsp.animalis, strain DN-173.010.</p> <p>O motivo pelo qual a bebida láctea Activia ajuda na digestão é pelo simples facto de que a bactéria adicionada pela Danone pertence a uma cepa mais irritante para a mucosa intestinal, que ao entrar em contacto trata de expelir o mais rapidamente possível o material fecal.</p> <p>Alimento probiótico, eles dizem... Até quando vamos ser ingénuos (ou seria mais correto otários) de acreditar cegamente em propagandas e em campanhas de marketing??</p>

Negative information followed by positive information (low credibility)

	English	Portuguese
Part I	<p>Danone is one of the most well-known lacteous companies, working in our country for many years now. One of the products it commercializes are Corpos Danone and Activia yogurts.</p>	<p>A <i>Danone</i> é uma das mais conhecidas empresas ao nível dos produtos lácteos, operando no nosso país há vários anos. Entre os produtos que comercializa estão os iogurtes <i>Corpos Danone</i> e <i>Activia</i>.</p>
	<p>The corporate social responsibility strategy of the company is based in two pillars: employees (internal) and people (external). In the last few years the company has invested in the working conditions of its employees, trying to promote the balance between professional and personal life.</p>	<p>A estratégia de responsabilidade social da empresa assenta em duas vertentes: colaboradores (interna) e pessoas, em particular as crianças (externa). Nos últimos anos a empresa tem vindo a fazer um investimento nas condições de trabalho dos seus colaboradores, procurando promover o equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e a vida pessoal.</p>
	<p>However, when the company's profits were growing at a rate of two digits and its dividends grew 13%, Danone decided to perform a restructure of the business and closed five plants in Europe. This led to unemployment of 2000 people and created a wave of protests for the company's human resources practices. The only purpose of this restructure was to reduce costs with personnel and, consequently, increase (even more) company's profits.</p>	<p>Porém, numa altura em que os lucros da empresa cresciam a taxas de dois dígitos e os dividendos aumentavam 13%, a <i>Danone</i> decidiu efetuar uma reestruturação do negócio e fechou cinco fábricas europeias. Isto levou ao despedimento de mais de 2000 colaboradores e gerou uma onda de protesto pelas práticas de recursos humanos da empresa. O intuito único desta reestruturação foi a redução dos custos com o pessoal e, por conseguinte, aumentar (ainda mais) os lucros da empresa.</p>
	<p>Regarding its products, Danone has been facing several protests because of the properties that allegedly have and those that are proved to exist, and what lead to the modification of several advertisement campaigns on TV. Therefore, marketing policies cause mistrust on consumers.</p> <p>On the other hand, Danone has been questioned about the quality of the milk they use in their production process. The company has partnerships with suppliers that are accused of genetic manipulation and intensive production, in order to make the cows to be able to produce 100l of milk per day, 10 times more of what would be natural and expectable. The animals are exposed to hormonal treatments, to stimulate their rapid growth. Scientific studies demonstrate that the existence of these hormones has been associated with cancer in human beings. Furthermore, cows are administrated with great doses of antibiotics, in order to treat health problems associated with the conditions in which they live. These antibiotics continue in milk and yogurts, with terrible consequences to public health, since they damage severely the immunity system of human beings. Danone tries to go far away from this danger, but without succeeding, since there is not much information regarding the origin of the milk used by the company.</p>	<p>No âmbito dos seus produtos, a <i>Danone</i> tem vindo também a receber alguma contestação por força das propriedades que alega terem e aquelas que foram provadas, o que levou à alteração de diversas campanhas televisivas. Daí que as políticas de marketing originem desconfiança junto dos consumidores.</p> <p>Por outro lado, a <i>Danone</i> tem vindo a ser questionada em relação à qualidade do leite que utiliza na fabricação dos seus produtos. A empresa tem parcerias com fornecedores de leite que foram acusados de manipulação genética e produção intensiva, para que as vacas leiteiras sejam capazes de produzir 100 litros de leite por dia, 10 vezes mais do que seria natural. Os animais são alimentados com rações e sujeitos a tratamentos com hormonas, para estimular o seu crescimento rápido. Estudos científicos demonstram que a presença destas hormonas tem sido associada com casos de cancro em seres humanos. Para além disso, as vacas leiteiras são sujeitas a elevadas doses de antibióticos, de forma a tratar doenças resultantes da falta de condições condignas. Estes antibióticos mantêm-se presentes no leite e iogurtes, com graves consequências para a saúde pública, pois debilitam seriamente o sistema imunitário humano. A <i>Danone</i> tenta distanciar-se deste perigo, no entanto, sem sucesso, pois ainda pouco se sabe acerca da origem do leite que é usado na produção dos seus iogurtes.</p>

The following data was retrieved from an e-mail that has been circulating around recently and whose author was not identified. It analyses the properties of the Activia Yogurts from Danone. Read the following text and answer the question below.

After all, what is Activia? What is bifidus ActiRegularis?

Activia is fermented milk that associates the traditional bacteria of yogurts to a specific ferment especially developed by Danone, bifidus ActiRegularis.

It is a probiotic food, which means that it contains live microorganisms that produce beneficial effects to health once consumed in sufficient quantities.

According to several studies, this yogurt is a lot better than those offered by the competitors. Activia products, by themselves, allow the improvement of the bowel functions as well as the reduction of the swollen stomach.

What improves? Everything!!

Your HEALTH GETS BETTER!

YOUR LIFE GETS BETTER!

Activia ACTIVATES your HEALTH.

Os dados seguintes foram retirados de um e-mail que recentemente circulou por um número alargado de pessoas e cuja origem não foi apurada. Trata-se da avaliação das propriedades dos iogurtes *Activia* da *Danone*. Leia o texto que se segue e responda à pergunta que colocamos posteriormente.

Afinal, o que é Activia? O que são os bifidus ActiRegularis?

Activia é um leite fermentado que associa as bactérias tradicionais do iogurte a um fermento específico especialmente desenvolvido **pela Danone, bifidus ActiRegularis**.

É um alimento probiótico, ou seja, contém microrganismos vivos que ao serem ingeridos em quantidades suficientes exercem **EFEITOS BENÉFICOS NA SAÚDE**.

De acordo com vários estudos, este iogurte é muito melhor do que aqueles que são oferecidos pela concorrência. Os produtos Activia, só por si, permitem melhorar o trânsito intestinal e reduzir a barriga inchada.

O que melhora? TUDO!!

A SUA SAÚDE MELHORA.

A SUA VIDA MELHORA.

Activia ACTIVA a sua SAÚDE.

Part II