



Fashion and CRS: An experimental study of the effect of CSR messages on fashion products

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how Portuguese consumers react to various corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the fashion industry. Experimental research was conducted to evaluate the impact of CSR messages on Portuguese consumers' willingness to pay for and perceptions of fashion products. The study also investigated which specific CSR practices were most effective. The results revealed that consumers are generally responsive to information about CSR and that this can affect their perceptions of a brand's products. These findings suggest that while consumers do have filters that can influence their perceptions of a brand and its products, they are sensitive to information about CSR. Further research could investigate how to market segment and clothing type influence consumer perceptions and responses, as well as identify any potential moderating factors that may impact these relationships. The results of this study provide insights for both companies and researchers interested in understanding the complex relationship between CSR and consumer responses.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Fashion industry, CSR in Portugal, Portuguese consumers, Brand Perception.

Resumo

Este estudo teve como objetivo investigar como os consumidores portugueses reagem a várias iniciativas de responsabilidade social corporativa (CSR) na indústria da moda. Foi realizada uma pesquisa experimental para avaliar o impacto das mensagens de CSR na disposição dos consumidores portugueses à compra e nas percepções de produtos de moda. O estudo também investigou quais práticas de CSR eram mais eficazes. Os resultados revelaram que os consumidores são geralmente recetivos à informação sobre CSR e que isso pode afetar suas percepções dos produtos de uma marca. Estes resultados sugerem que, embora os consumidores tenham filtros que podem influenciar suas percepções de uma marca e seus produtos, eles são sensíveis à informação sobre CSR. Futuras pesquisas poderiam investigar como o segmento de mercado e o tipo de roupa influenciam as percepções e as respostas dos consumidores, bem como identificar quaisquer fatores moderadores potenciais que podem afetar essas relações. Os resultados deste estudo fornecem insights tanto para as empresas quanto para os pesquisadores interessados em compreender a complexa relação entre CSR e as respostas dos consumidores.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade social corporativa, Indústria da moda, CSR em Portugal, Consumidores portugueses, Percepção da marca.

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List of Acronyms

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

ATC: Attitude Toward the Company

TRU: Trustworthiness

ATP: Attitude toward the brand's price

UNQ: Uniqueness of the object

QUA: Quality of the retailer's products

WTP: Willingness to purchase

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Introduction

Countless organizations rate companies on their corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance, and despite sometimes questionable methods, these rankings get a fair amount of attention. As a result, CSR has become an imperative priority for business leaders in all countries (Porter & Kramer, 2007). Companies not only have to create value for shareholders but it's becoming the new requirement that companies need to create value for all stakeholders.

This is especially true in the fashion industry, which is currently the second dirtiest industry in the world, as assessed by its use of pesticides, toxic dye runoff into waterways, the sheer volume of waste (both production waste and post-consumer waste), and harmful water and land consumption, among other criteria (Dietz, 2016). In addition, clothes production is extremely labor-intensive, and firms seek inexpensive labor worldwide; hence, the production process is frequently outsourced to nations with dense populations and low salaries, such as China and India (Książak, 2016).

The negative impacts of the fashion industry, including pollution, worker exploitation, and excessive resource consumption are the shadow side of the fashion industry's glamorous façade (Lin, 2022). To remain competitive in a constantly changing global economy, fashion companies must adapt to shifts in customer tastes and technological advancements while also addressing their CSR responsibilities.

Despite the growing relevance of CSR in the fashion business, there is still a lack of understanding of how it affects consumers' perception and purchasing behavior, particularly in the Portuguese market. This is an important issue that deserves further investigation, as understanding the impact of CSR on consumer perception and purchasing decisions has significant implications for both businesses and society.

There are many questions that businesses may have when considering how to incorporate CSR principles and practices into their operations. Some of the common questions that businesses may have include:

1. What are the benefits of implementing CSR practices? Some businesses may be unsure about the benefits of implementing CSR practices and may need to be convinced that it is worth the investment.

2. How do we decide which CSR practices to implement? Businesses may have multiple options for CSR practices to choose from, and it can be challenging to determine which ones will be the most effective.

Overall, implementing CSR practices can be a complex process that requires careful planning and consideration. By addressing these questions, businesses can develop effective CSR strategies that align with their values and goals and that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

In this dissertation, we use an experimental research design to test the effect of CSR messages on the willingness to pay and perceptions of fashion products with Portuguese consumers. The dissertation will also explore which specific CSR practices are most impactful.

This research is particularly relevant in the context of the Portuguese market, as CSR is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the fashion industry and is likely to have an impact on consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. By studying the perceived reactions of Portuguese consumers to different CSR practices, this research aims to provide valuable insights for fashion businesses seeking to effectively implement CSR and for policymakers seeking to support responsible practices in the industry.

This dissertation is structured into four main chapters. The first chapter is a literature review, which provides an overview of the academic background of CSR, including the different categories of CSR, consumer reactions to CSR, the state of CSR in Portugal, and its relevance in the fashion industry. The second chapter presents the results of a quantitative study, which used questionnaires to evaluate the sensitivity of consumers to different CSR practices in three different market segments while controlling for three types of clothing items. The third chapter offers recommendations and discusses the limitations of the research, and the fourth chapter summarizes the main conclusions of the study.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an increasingly important aspect of a company's customer relationship management (CRM) strategy. Some companies only pay lip service to CSR, while others fully embrace it as a core part of their business purpose. The public perception of a company's CSR efforts, including whether it is seen as genuine or as "greenwashing" for PR purposes, can have significant impacts on the company's reputation and success. Implementing sustainability compliance can also be costly, and the economic benefits may not be immediately apparent. However, companies that make CSR a priority may gain a competitive advantage and improve their chances of survival in a rapidly changing business environment (Di Benedetto, 2017).

Business productivity has largely been driven by economic globalization, which has allowed companies to increase profits through low-cost manufacturing. However, this has also led to criticism of businesses for the negative externalities such as environmental and social harm caused by outsourcing production. There is growing public pressure on businesses to minimize these negative impacts. Izeusse Dias Braga, the chief communication officer of Petrobras, explained in a 2012 speech that companies are increasingly motivated to integrate corporate responsibility and sustainability into their operations due to three main factors: (a) increased expectations from stakeholders, (b) declining resources, and (c) the rise of radical transparency through the media, activists, NGOs, and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (Schüz, M. 2012).

But what does corporate responsibility entail? Like biological systems, social systems such as businesses can only sustain themselves in the long term if they work with other systems (e.g., stakeholders) to fit into the larger whole, or in other words, if they find their ecological niche or purpose. To do this, physical, social, and mental resources must be fairly exchanged to maintain the health of the business (Schüz, M. 2012).

For example, an industrial company requires physical resources such as financial capital, raw materials, and buildings, as well as social resources like suppliers, employees, and customers, and mental resources like ideas, inventions, and strategies to provide meaningful products and services. These resources together constitute the company's ecological niche. However, if

these resources are obtained at the expense of the environment, they may be withheld in the long run (Schüz, M. 2012).

It can be challenging to balance the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of corporate responsibility, as they may appear to be conflicting at first glance. While social and ecological activities may seem to harm economic outcomes, they can generate profits through stakeholder collaboration and customer loyalty. Neglecting these dimensions can damage a company's credibility and lead to long-term economic losses (Schüz, M. 2012).

Therefore, corporate responsibility can be defined as the act of being accountable for the consequences of a company's actions towards authorities: economically, by being professional to shareholders; socially, by getting along well with all stakeholders; and ecologically, by acting responsibly and respectfully towards nature and other beings (Schüz, M. 2012).

According to research by Sroka and Szántó (2018), business ethics are seen as a critical factor that affects the success and corporate image of firms. However, from the perspective of the respondents, it is virtually impossible to conduct business in a completely ethical manner in every aspect. The study also found that the importance of business ethics and CSR varies among different countries. For example, institutionalization is stronger in Hungarian businesses, while avoiding and managing corruption issues is a priority for Polish businesses.

The role and importance of CSR and business ethics are particularly evident in controversial industries. Companies operating in these sectors are expected to demonstrate ethical behavior and engage in CSR practices intensely, as they seek organizational legitimacy (Reast, Maon, Lindgreen, & Vanhamme, 2013).

According to MacGregor et al. (2020), the ideal pro-CSR position should improve the company's competitive advantage, increase efficiency and effectiveness at all management and strategic levels, and enhance the company's reputation among the public.

CSR Categories

Feng et al. (2017) highlighted in their analysis of comparative studies across industries and CSR categories that CSR is a multidimensional concept and should thus be assessed in

disaggregated dimensions. The authors explicitly cite the research conducted by Wang and Berens (2015), who analyzed how a company that engages in various forms of CSR may establish a positive corporate reputation among its stakeholders and so achieve strong financial performance. Economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic social performance were the four categories of CSR that were studied (Carroll, 1979, 1991).

This study will apply the same four categories as Feng et al. (2017): employee-oriented CSR, environment-oriented CSR, society-oriented CSR, and market-oriented CSR (Mandl and Dorr, 2007). These categories refer to CSR efforts that are geared toward various stakeholder groups.

Employee-oriented CSR activities, as defined by Mandl and Dorr (2007), focus on the well-being and satisfaction of the company's most important internal stakeholders: its employees. These activities can include measures to improve workplace health and safety, such as providing proper safety equipment and training. They may also address issues related to labor rights, such as fair wages, benefits, and working conditions. Other employee-oriented CSR initiatives may include providing flexible working hours, training and development opportunities, equal opportunities, and diversity, and promoting work-life balance.

Environment-focused CSR initiatives prioritize environmental protection, sustainable development, and the responsible use of natural resources. These activities may include measures to reduce waste and pollution, such as implementing eco-friendly production processes or recycling programs. They may also involve initiatives to conserve natural resources, such as reducing energy and water consumption or using sustainable materials.

Society-focused CSR initiatives emphasize the company's role in the community and its interactions with local institutions and groups. These initiatives may include participating in community events, collaborating with local organizations, or contributing to social causes. They may also involve efforts to promote social integration and inclusion, such as supporting diverse and marginalized groups.

Market-oriented CSR efforts are activities aimed at improving the quality and safety of the company's products, as well as its reputation in the market. These initiatives may include efforts to innovate and improve products, as well as pricing strategies that are fair and

transparent. They may also involve ethical advertising practices that are honest and respectful of consumers.

Since each CSR category focuses on addressing the concerns of different stakeholder groups, we would expect them to have varying effects on the financial performance of businesses (Mandl and Dorr, 2007).

Fashion industry

Most firms in the clothing and footwear industry have recently begun incorporating CSR into their business strategies. Many have done so in reaction to pressure from external stakeholders or media coverage of crises involving child labor or factory collapses. Even though clothing and footwear industry firms attempt to project a favorable image by demonstrating CSR activity transparency, this primarily responds to stakeholder pressure (reactive CSR) (Achabou, 2020).

Bhattacharya and Sen's (2004) study demonstrates that customer reactions to CSR are not as easy and obvious as market surveys imply; several factors influence whether a company's CSR initiatives convert into consumer purchases. According to the authors, managers must comprehend why and how customers respond to CSR activities. By studying consumer responses to CSR, businesses may build ideal CSR strategies from both a normative and a commercial standpoint. CSR activities are a novel and difficult-to-replicate method for establishing client connections.

The current perception among businesses is that lasting corporate success cannot be attained just through the maximization of short-term earnings, but also through responsible behavior geared toward the market. Currently, the pursuit of excellence necessitates consideration of the trinomial economy, society, and environment, sometimes known as the "triple bottom line" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).

One example of a fashion company that has demonstrated a strong commitment to CSR is Patagonia, a leading outdoor clothing and gear company. Patagonia has implemented several initiatives to reduce its environmental impact, including the use of sustainable materials and the promotion of responsible manufacturing practices. In addition, the company has

established a number of partnerships with organizations focused on social and environmental causes, such as 1% for the Planet and the Environmental Defense Fund.

Another example of a fashion company that has embraced CSR is H&M, a leading clothing retailer. H&M has implemented several initiatives to support the communities in which it operates, including supporting education and training programs and promoting sustainable development. The company has also committed to reducing its environmental impact through initiatives such as using sustainable materials and promoting circular fashion.

Overall, the literature suggests that CSR is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the fashion industry, with many companies recognizing the benefits it can bring in terms of reputation, financial performance, and social and environmental impact.

Consumers' perception of CSR

In the article "Fashion Industry: Is it Really Walking and Talking CSR?", Colucci et al. (2019) pointed out that, from the institutional perspective of CSR, companies will adapt their CSR behavior to the institutional environment in which they are embedded in order to gain and maintain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Campbell, 2007). According to the institutional theory, a company's CSR behavior may change depending on the pressure it faces from consumers, as represented by the market segment it serves. In the fashion industry, market segments are often based on price and can be divided into five categories: couture, ready-to-wear, diffusion, bridge, and mass market (Corbellini & Saviolo, 2009). In response to the characteristics of these market segments, a company may alter its product offerings, retail format, communication strategies, and CSR engagement.

The mass-market fashion industry has undergone a significant reorganization, with companies adopting lower prices and higher volumes, leading to the rise of "throwaway fashion" or low-cost fast fashion (Kozlowski et al., 2015). This consumption culture has negative social and environmental impacts (Pedersen et al., 2016). As a result, companies operating in the lower price segments may be motivated to undertake and advertise CSR initiatives as a way of correcting their irresponsible behaviors, establishing a positive image, and gaining customer acceptance (Palmer et al., 2016).

According to Wei and Jung's (2021) research, when fast fashion companies introduce CSR programs, customers may perceive these brands as hypocritical, as their business model is often seen as incompatible with sustainable standards. As an example, they cited the debut of H&M's "H&M Conscious" collections in 2012, which promoted environmentally responsible fashion goods (Weigle, 2012), and ZARA's introduction of its "Join Life" sustainable collection to demonstrate the company's commitment to the environment (Greggs, 2022).

However, Wei and Jung (2021) pointed out that even if fast fashion companies claim to be working towards sustainability by offering "ecologically-friendly" collections, the majority of their products are still made using the fast fashion model, which is neither environmentally nor socially sustainable.

As a result of the gap between fast fashion companies' CSR statements and their actual CSR performance, consumers may perceive corporate hypocrisy (Wagner et al., 2009), leading to suspicion of CSR initiatives and negative views of the organization (Wagner et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important to examine customers' perceptions of corporate dishonesty in the fast fashion industry in order to prevent brand equity degradation.

According to Wei and Jung's study, previous research has shown that customers generally have a negative opinion of fast fashion companies' sustainability promises and recognize that these companies create more problems than they solve (Cendrowska and Nielsen 2018). This perception can be a barrier to fast fashion companies establishing sustainability (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Overall, fast fashion has a negative reputation that makes it difficult for customers to accept any claims of environmental benefits from these companies (Park and Kim, 2016).

Previous research has shown that when there is a discrepancy between a company's statements and actions, customers are more likely to be skeptical of its CSR claims (Wagner et al., 2009; Wei & Jung, 2021), leading to negative brand perceptions. As a result, fast fashion companies must ensure that their CSR activities are transparent and align with their target customers' expectations.

Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) found in their study on the impact of perceived CSR on customer behavior that it is questionable whether consumers will view social efforts as genuine actions and therefore may or may not reward the company. The study provides empirical evidence

that when social activities do not align with business goals, CSR can become a liability, contradicting previous assumptions about corporations. Therefore, marketers should carefully select social programs and ensure that their communications link the social domain with the company so that customers view the efforts as proactive and socially motivated (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006).

Consumer expectations about CSR have likely increased in the past 5-10 years due to the increased number of companies with social responsibility programs, the increased communication of these efforts to the public, and the promotion of corporate wrongdoing by consumer groups and calls for large-scale boycotts (Snider et al., 2003).

CSR in Portugal

At the European level, not all nations are at the same stage of economic development. While southern European nations like Spain and Portugal have emerged, with environmental protection plans and a weaker economic structure, central and northern European nations have greater income levels and well-developed and mature environmental legislation (essentially composed of small- and medium-sized enterprises) (Robaina & Madaleno, 2019).

However, CSR has gained increasing attention in the Portuguese market in recent years, with more and more companies seeking to incorporate social and environmental concerns into their business practices. The number of businesses establishing codes of behavior, seeking environmental certification, and pursuing social aims is increasing (Rego et al., 2003).

Portugal has substantial environmental interests, and certain businesses, such as waste management and renewable energy, are especially committed to environmental progress. Thanks to eco-innovation and a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, small and medium-sized firms are introducing new products and services to the market in various established industries, such as the textile, clothing, and footwear industry and the agricultural sector (Lorena, 2018).

Despite the foregoing, there is a dearth of information that allows us to comprehend the national Portuguese CSR situation and the "formulas" for its implementation. (Rebelo et al., 2010) CSR is still in its early stages and is more concerned with commercial and journalistic

practice than with the advancement of scientific knowledge. Academic understanding of CSR in Portugal is limited, and research is scarce (Lopes & António, 2016)

Hypotheses development and Conceptual Framework

In this study, we use an experimental design to test the effect of CSR practices on consumer perceptions and reactions to fashion products. The concept of consumer sensitivity groups all our dependent variables and includes attitude towards the company, trustworthiness, uniqueness of the product, quality of the retailer's products, willingness to purchase, and attitude towards the brand's price. By examining these variables, the aim is to understand how they influence consumer perceptions of a brand and its products. CSR practices are manipulated using a text-based message associated with the fashion product and include environment, diversity, and inclusion, or product. In addition, brand segments (high, mid, and low cost) and clothing (t-shirts, trainers, and trousers) were also manipulated to control the CSR effects across different segments and products. Overall, by controlling for these factors, the goal is to gain a better understanding of what factors may be influencing people's different perspectives about different CSR practices.

The main goal of this study is to examine the relationship between CSR practices and consumer sensitivity. We believe that CSR practices can influence consumer reactions, but that the specific effect may depend on the type of CSR practice, the brand segment, and the product being considered. To test this hypothesis, we will be conducting a research study in which we will be examining the main effects of each of these three independent variables (CSR practices, brand segment, and clothing) on consumer perceptions and reactions. We will also be analyzing the interaction effects between these variables to see how they may influence consumer sensitivity.

We expect that our study will reveal a global effect of CSR on consumer sensitivity, meaning that overall, the presence of CSR practices will have an impact on consumer reactions. However, we also anticipate that these effects may vary depending on the specific type of CSR practice being considered, the brand segment, and the product being evaluated. We do not have specific predictions for the results of this study, as it is one of the first to use this type of research design.

To test our hypothesis, we will be collecting data from a sample of consumers who will be asked to evaluate different brands, products, and CSR practices. We will use statistical analysis techniques to examine the main and interaction effects of these variables on consumer perceptions and reactions. Through this process, we hope to gain a better understanding of the relationship between CSR practices and consumer sensitivity and how this relationship may vary depending on different factors.

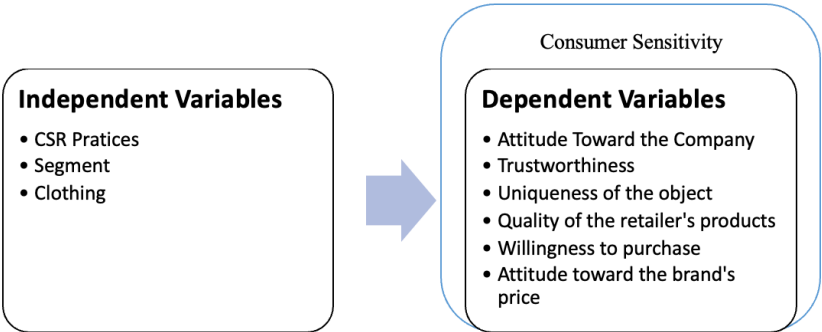


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the experimental design.

Research Methods

The purpose of this research is to understand how CSR initiatives impact consumer reactions and brand perception in the Portuguese market. To collect data for this study, an experimental research design will be used, which involves randomly assigning participants to different variations of the independent variable (the type of CSR initiative) to observe the effects on the dependent variable (consumer reactions and brand perception).

The control group in this study will consist of consumers who are not exposed to any CSR initiatives, while the experimental group(s) will be composed of consumers who are exposed to different types of CSR initiatives. By comparing the responses of the control group with those of the experimental group(s), the study will be able to determine whether the CSR initiatives have a statistically significant effect on consumer reactions and brand perception.

Sample

The target sample will be all consumers who live in Portugal and are above eighteen years old as the objective of the study is to understand the perception e response of Portuguese consumers to brands that have and sell in the Portuguese market.

The sample consisted of a total of 123 people, of which 28% are male and 72% are female. Regarding the age of the sample, the age groups with higher participation include persons between the age of 18 and 24 (34%) and the ages of 45 and 54 (26%). A substantial proportion of individuals have advanced degrees, such as a doctorate (30%) or an undergraduate degree (24%).

Study Design

The questionnaire for this study was created in Qualtrics and distributed from November 3rd to *November* 14th, 2022. It was disseminated through social media postings, fliers, and emails to potential participants.

The questionnaire included questions based on scales from previously validated research, using multiple-item measures with Likert-type and semantic differential scales. It was designed in Portuguese, as the target sample consisted exclusively of Portuguese consumers in order to analyze the Portuguese market.

The survey was divided into four sections. The first set of questions focused on collecting socio-demographic information about the participants. The second set of questions focused on measuring brand relevance. In the third section, participants selected a clothing item/brand and were randomly assigned to a CSR practice as part of the experimental manipulation. The fourth section evaluated the participants' reactions to the CSR manipulation using the specified measurements.

Participant Characterization

This part of the survey included an introduction to the study and a consent form for the use of the information provided. It also included a filter question to select individuals who were living in Portugal and participating in the Portuguese market at the time of the survey. Those who did not meet these criteria were directed to the end of the survey without answering any further questions.

Following this, the questionnaire included socio-demographic questions to gather information relevant to the analysis, such as gender, age, and education level. These questions helped me understand the characteristics of the participants.

Brand Relevance

In this section of the survey, the objective was to evaluate the importance of the brand in a consumer's purchase decision. To do this, a scale called "Brand Relevance in Category" was used, which consists of seven-point Likert-type items. This scale measures the extent to which consumers consider the brand of a product when making a purchase.

By asking questions related to the perceived importance of the brand in the purchase decision, the objective was to gain insights into the factors that influence consumer behavior and how they may be affected by brand reputation and other factors.

Brand and CSR Manipulation

In this section, participants were first asked to choose their preferred item from a list of three options: trainers, t-shirts, or trousers. They were then provided with a description of the brand they selected, which included a brief overview of the brand and its history. In addition to this, some participants were also given information about the brand's CSR practices in one of three areas: environment, diversity and inclusion, or product. This information was included to influence the participant's perceptions of the brand, while the control group received only a description of the brand without any mention of CSR practices.

The environment text highlighted the brand's commitment to using eco-friendly resources, such as GOTS cotton, and implementing renewable energy in their supply chain to reduce their environmental impact. The diversity and inclusion text emphasized the company's culture of equality, respect, and inclusivity, as well as its zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and efforts to create diverse teams. The product text described the brand's use of the "Sou Eu" stamp, which signifies the product's national origin (Portugal) and high level of national incorporation, and the potential benefits of purchasing such products for the economy and environment.

To further understand how consumer perceptions are impacted by CSR practices and market segments, the participants in this study were presented with three different scenarios featuring different brand segments: luxury, mid-market, and discount. These segments were chosen to represent a range of price points and target markets, and all participants received a unique combination of these conditions, with the elements randomly combined. This allowed evaluation of how consumer perceptions of a brand are influenced by both the brand's CSR practices and its market segment.

Assessment of Reaction

After being presented with the brand and CSR manipulation information, participants were asked to evaluate their sensitivity to different CSR practices in different segments of the fashion industry. Sensitivity was defined as a combination of several variables: attitude towards the company, trustworthiness, uniqueness of the product, quality of the retailer's products, willingness to purchase, and attitude towards the brand's price. These questions were used to gauge the participants' perceptions of the brand and its CSR practices.

Attitude toward the company (ATC) was measured using six items developed from the scale by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), which was based on the original scale by Homer (1995). This variable measures a person's overall evaluation of a specific business entity. In the version used in the survey, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on a seven-point scale for each of the six items, which were chosen to be relevant to the study.

Trustworthiness (TRU) was measured using three items from the validated scale by Kirmani et al. (2017). This variable assesses how much a person believes that a company is honest and not manipulative, and it was measured using a seven-point semantic differential scale. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement for each of the three items, with options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

The uniqueness of the product (UNQ) was measured using three items created by Smith, Newman, and Dhar (2016). This variable measures the rarity and scarcity of a product and was assessed using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement for each of the three items, which asked about the product's rarity, uniqueness, and scarcity.

Willingness to purchase (WTP) evaluates the extent to which a consumer expresses an inclination to purchase a particular product. This validated scale is developed by White et al. (2016) and asks the respondent how likely he is to buy a product in seven-point semantic differentials. The extremes of the scale were “very unlikely to buy this product / very likely to buy this product”.

Attitude toward the brand's price (ATP) these variable measures the consumer's belief that the price of a brand is reasonable, and a good value is measured using seven-point Likert-type items. The scale created by Heinberg, Ozkaya, and Taube (2016) is based on inspiration from the work of Maddox (1982). In the study, respondents were asked to select how much they

agree with affirmations on a scale with the anchor extremes from strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7). The quotes consisted in asking if the individual considered that the brand has attractive prices, is a good buy, or is available for reasonable prices.

Reliability and Validation

To test the reliability of the measures used in the survey, we used Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Pallant (2001) states Alpha Cronbach's value above 0.6 is considered high reliability and acceptable index (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The Cronbach alpha values for all measures used in the survey are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of the dependent variables.

	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
1. Attitude Toward the Company	0.96	6
2. Trustworthiness	0.93	4
3. Attitude toward the brand's price	0.77	3
4. Uniqueness of the object	0.91	3
5. Quality of the retailer's products	0.88	3
6. Willingness to purchase	-	1

Results

Overall favorable perceptions about the shown products

On average, respondents had positive perceptions of the company, with most giving high consideration to variables such as attitude towards the company, trustworthiness, and attitude towards the price of the brand. These variables had mean values above the midpoint of the scale, which ranges from 1 to 7 with 4 being the midpoint. However, respondents were not overly positive, as the mean values for these variables were not close to the maximum point of the scale. The willingness to purchase was close to the midpoint, with a mean value of 4.03, while the uniqueness of the object had the lowest mean value of all the variables, at 3.04. The quality of the retailer's products had the highest mean value, at 5.04.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed that there is a strong positive relationship between "Attitude Toward the Company" and "Trustworthiness." This means that respondents who had a positive attitude toward the company were also likely to perceive the company as trustworthy. The correlation coefficient for this relationship was .80, and the p-value was less than .001, indicating that this relationship is statistically significant.

The analysis also revealed a moderate positive correlation between the "Quality of the retailer's products" and several other variables. Specifically, there was a moderate positive correlation between "Quality of the retailer's products" and "Attitude Toward the Company" ($r = .41, p < .001$), "Trustworthiness" ($r = .42, p < .001$), and "Uniqueness of the object" ($r = .39, p < .001$). This means that respondents who rated the quality of the retailer's products highly were also likely to have a positive attitude towards the company, perceive the company as trustworthy, and view the objects sold by the company as unique.

Table 2. Mean, Median, Max, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of all Variables

	Min	Median	Max	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.Attitude Toward the Company	1.00	5.00	7.00	4.98	1.27	1					
2.Trustworthiness	1.00	4.88	7.00	4.83	1.28	.80***	1				
3.Attitude toward the brand's price	1.00	4.83	7.00	4.63	1.45	.21***	.20***	1			
4.Uniqueness of the object	1.00	2.67	7.00	3.04	1.61	.19***	.21***	.06	1		

5. Quality of the retailer's products	1.50	5.25	7.00	5.04	1.23	.41***	.42***	-	.39***	1
6. Willingness to purchase	1.00	4.00	7.00	4.03	2.03	.32***	.25***	.48***	.20***	.07

Note: SD – Standard Deviation
* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

CSR manipulations do not have the expected effect

An ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted to examine the effects of CSR on six outcome variables, while also considering the effects of clothing type and market segment. The four CSR conditions included Inclusion, Environment, Product, and None, while the three Clothing conditions included T-shirts, Trousers, and Trainers. The three Segment conditions included Luxury, Mid-Market, and Discount.

The purpose of this ANOVA was to compare the control condition (None) to the other CSR conditions, and to examine the interaction between these conditions, controlling for clothing type and market segment. This allows for a more detailed analysis of the effects of CSR on the outcome variables, and how these effects may vary based on the type of clothing and the market segment.

Table 3. ANOVA Results

	ATC	TRU	ATP	UNQ	QUA	WTP
CSR	F=0.331	F=0.600	F=0.087	F=1.161	F=1.988	F=0.718
Segment	F=1.864	F=0.406	F=120.520***	F=8.774***	F=47.045***	F=20.923***
Clothing	F=1.641	F=1.094	F=3.112*	F=6.255**	F=1.636	F=5.011 **
Segment*CSR	F=0.883	F=1.053	F=1.548	F=0.650	F=1.293	F=0.494
Clothing*CSR	F=1.269	F= 0.938	F=0.872	F=2.469*	F=1.240	F=2.895**
Segment*Clothing	F=2.222	F=2.388	F=0.439	F=0.510	F=1.850	F=1.166
Segment*CSR*Clothing	F=0.735	F=0.855	F=0.561	F=1.271	F=0.956	F=1.059

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Overall, the results of the ANOVA did not support the main predictions, as there was no main effect of the manipulation of CSR on the six outcome variables. However, the analysis did reveal a main effect of **Segment** and **Clothing** on the variables "Attitude toward the brand's price," "Uniqueness of the object," "Quality of the retailer's products," and "Willingness to

purchase." This means that these variables were affected by the market segment and clothing type, but not by the manipulation of CSR.

The condition Segment has the most influence

The ANOVA model showed the condition Segment has significant effect on four of the six dependent variables. The results of the ANOVA indicate that **Segment** had a significant effect on the variables "Attitude toward the brand's price," "Uniqueness of the object," "Quality of the retailer's products," and "Willingness to purchase." Specifically, the analysis showed that there were significant differences in these variables across the different market segments.

For the variable "Attitude toward the brand's price," the differences between the market segments were significant, with a p-value of less than .001. When the means were compared, the Discount segment had the highest value for this variable, at 5.442, while the Luxury segment had the lowest value, at 3.125.

The ANOVA model for the variable "Uniqueness of the object" also showed significant differences between the market segments, with a p-value of less than .001. The Luxury segment had the highest value for this variable, at 3.621, while the Discount segment had the lowest value, at 2.778.

The model for the variable "Quality of the retailer's products" showed that there were significant differences between the market segments, with a p-value of less than .001. The Luxury segment was perceived as having higher quality products, with a mean value of 5.850, while the Discount segment was perceived as having lower quality products, with a mean value of 4.408.

Finally, the results for the variable "Willingness to purchase" showed significant differences between the market segments, with a p-value of less than .001. Consumers were more inclined to buy products from the Mid-market segment, with a mean value of 4.496, while products from the Luxury segment had the lowest willingness to buy of all the segments, with a mean value of 2.932.

Table 4. Means of dependent variables: Condition Segment

	ATC	SD	TRU	SD	ATP	SD	UNQ	SD	QUA	SD	WTP	SD
1 -Luxury	4.964	1.337	4.869	1.299	3.125	1.230	3.621	1.790	5.850	0.950	2.932	1.952
2- Mid-Market	5.146	1.272	4.884	1.280	4.947	1.111	2.880	1.366	5.055	0.941	4.496	1.817
3- Discount	4.821	1.268	4.739	1.335	5.442	0.943	2.778	1.540	4.408	1.228	4.393	2.008

Clothing had some effects on dependent variables

According to the results of the ANOVA, clothing type had a significant effect on three of the six dependent variables.

For the variable "Attitude toward the brand's price," the ANOVA results showed that clothing type had a significant effect, with a p-value of less than .05. When the means were compared, T-shirts had the highest value for this variable, at 4.745, while Trousers had the lowest value, at 4.556.

The ANOVA results also showed that clothing type had a significant effect on the variable "Uniqueness of the object," with a p-value of less than .01. The means comparison revealed that Trainers were perceived as more unique, with a mean value of 3.493, while Trousers were perceived as less unique, with a mean value of 2.778.

Finally, the results for the variable "Willingness to purchase" showed that there were significant differences between clothing types, with a p-value of less than .01. Consumers were more likely to buy T-shirts, with a mean value of 4.105, while Trainers and Trousers had lower mean values of 1.999 and 1.961, respectively.

Table 5. Means of dependent variables: Condition Clothing

	ATC	SD	TRU	SD	ATP	SD	UNQ	SD	QUA	SD	WTP	SD
1 - Trousers	4.783	1.301	4.731	1.417	4.556	1.399	2.778	1.448	4.821	1.413	4.105	1.961
2 - Trainers	5.099	1.359	4.788	1.303	4.593	1.452	3.493	1.749	5.235	1.111	3.558	1.999
3 - T-shirt	5.046	1.195	4.967	1.179	4.745	1.470	2.830	1.445	5.040	1.010	4.472	2.053

A few effects of the interaction between CSR and Clothing

The ANOVA model revealed that the interaction between clothing type and CSR had a significant effect on the perception of "Uniqueness of the object." This means that the combination of these variables affected how respondents perceived the uniqueness of the objects being studied. The p-value of less than .05 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant.

Table 6. Means of the interaction between CSR and Clothing, on Uniqueness of the object

	1- Diversity and inclusion	2 - Environment	3 - Product	4 - No	Total
1 - Trousers	4.32	3.78	4.25	4.00	3.56
2 - Trainers	4.62	3.33	3.47	2.97	4.10
3 - T-shirt	3.72	4.64	4.57	5.00	4.47
Total	4.23	3.93	4.11	3.84	4.03

Scale of response: 1-7

The means comparison showed that when CSR is manipulated for Trousers and Trainers, the results are generally better than the control condition (No CSR). This suggests that these combinations have a positive impact on the perception of uniqueness. However, when a T-shirt lacks a CSR affiliation, it is perceived as more unique.

In addition, the ANOVA model indicated that the interaction of clothing type and CSR had a significant effect on "Willingness to purchase," with a p-value of less than .01. This means that the combination of these variables affected consumers' willingness to purchase the products being studied.

Table 7. Means of the interaction between CSR and Clothing, on Willingness to purchase

	1- Diversity and inclusion	2 - Environment	3 - Product	4 - No	Total
1 - Trousers	2.72	2.62	2.47	3.25	2.78
2 - Trainers	4.13	4.18	2.90	3.03	3.49
3 - T-shirt	2.73	2.65	2.92	3.00	2.83

Total	3.17	3.15	2.79	3.09	3.04
Scale of response: 1-7					

The analysis of “Willingness to Purchase” (WTP) reveals that individuals are more likely to buy Trainers when the company practices CSR in the areas of Diversity and inclusion (4.13) and Environmental Sustainability (4.18) compared to the control condition (3.03). However, the opposite trend is observed for Trousers and T-shirts, where the mean values for the "No" condition are higher than the values for the condition where CSR practices are manipulated. This suggests that individuals are generally more willing to purchase Trousers and T-shirts when there is no association with CSR.

A further test of the CSR manipulation

Although the analysis of variance (ANOVA) models did not reveal a significant effect of the CSR manipulation on the variables of interest, the descriptive analysis showed a pattern in the results where the control condition produced lower perceptions compared to the remaining CSR conditions. To further investigate the impact of the CSR scenarios on these variables, we conducted planned contrasts, aggregating the three CSR conditions and comparing them to the mean values of the control condition (absence of any CSR association). The analysis revealed that CSR practices (Product, Diversity and Inclusion, and Environment) were associated with a significant increase in the perception of uniqueness and quality of the retailer's products, with t-values of 2.297 ($p < .05$) and 2.535 ($p < .05$), respectively. We can say that there are no major differences between CSR conditions but a subtle pattern.

Table 8. Results Contrast CSR

	T-value	P-value
Attitude Toward the Company	1.432	0.153
Trustworthiness	0.790	0.430
Attitude toward the brand's price	0.783	0.434
Uniqueness of the object	2.297	0.022*
Quality of the retailer's products	2.535	0.012*

Willingness to purchase	1.298	0.196
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* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify the CSR initiatives to which Portuguese consumers are most responsive and sensitive, as well as their effects on brand image and perception. Our primary objective was to comprehend the various levels of response to various CSR practices. To achieve this objective, we implemented experimental research using a questionnaire to collect data. The experimental study manipulated four CSR conditions (Inclusion, Environment, Product, and None), three-segment conditions (Luxury, Mid-Market, and Discount), and three clothing conditions (T-shirt, Trousers, and Trainers). Each respondent was presented with unique company descriptions, with elements from each group of conditions randomly combined. After reading the company description, the respondent was asked to rate their level of response to the different CSR initiatives they were presented with and their perceptions of the brand's image. Overall, the results are not totally consistent with our predictions. The main effect of the CSR manipulation only shows with planned contrasts (with versus without CSR) and for Uniqueness of the object and Quality of the retailer's products. Additionally, the effect of CSR interacts with clothing for Uniqueness of the object and WTP but produces a pattern of results where CSR both, increases and decreases Uniqueness and WTP depending on the specific CSR dimensions and the specific product.

CSR Effects

The findings of this study suggest that CSR has an impact on consumers' perceptions of a brand and its products. While the results of the ANOVA tests did not show statistically significant outcomes when CSR was used as the independent variable, further analysis showed that there is a pattern of sensitivity to CSR information among consumers.

Specifically, when the CSR condition was present, individuals consistently showed higher levels of response to variables such as the uniqueness and quality of a brand's products. The findings also show that, of all the variables studied, CSR associations have a greater impact on consumers' perceptions of the uniqueness and quality of a brand's products.

Additionally, the combination of the Clothing condition and CSR condition had a significant effect on the perceived uniqueness of the item and the individual's likelihood to purchase it.

However, the effect of this combination varied depending on the type of clothing displayed, and there was no discernible pattern between the variables.

Overall, these findings suggest that while consumers do have filters that can affect their perceptions of a brand and its products, they are sensitive to information about CSR. However, the effects of this sensitivity are weak, and more research is needed to understand the full extent of the influence of CSR on consumer behavior.

Segment and Clothing

The results of the study suggest that the Segment plays a significant role in shaping how consumers perceive a product. This means that different market segments may have different perceptions of the same product, and these perceptions may be influenced by the specific characteristics or attributes that are associated with the product. For example, a product that is marketed towards a younger, more fashionable market segment may be perceived differently than the same product marketed towards a more traditional, conservative market segment.

Additionally, the study found that these perceptions can vary depending on the type of clothing being evaluated. This suggests that different types of clothing may be associated with different characteristics or attributes, and that these attributes may be appealing to different market segments.

Overall, these results indicate that consumer responses to a product may vary depending on the market segment and the specific product being considered. This highlights the importance of understanding the needs, preferences, and expectations of different market segments and tailoring product offerings and marketing efforts accordingly.

Limitations and future research

There are some limitations to this research that should be considered when interpreting the results. One limitation is that the experimental research was designed to elicit unconscious opinions and sincere responses from participants, but the results showed only very slight

effects. This could be due to several factors, such as the context in which the information was presented or the effectiveness of the CSR manipulation on the questionnaire.

One potential explanation for the small effects observed in the study is that the context in which the information was presented was not very realistic. Participants were simply presented with text descriptions of a company and its CSR practices in an online survey, and they were not making important purchase decisions that would impact their daily lives. This may not have been a high-pressure or realistic scenario for evaluating consumer reactions to CSR information.

Another possible explanation is that the use of text descriptions and questions in the questionnaire may not have been the most effective way to stimulate a response to the CSR manipulation. Research suggests that visual communication can be more powerful than verbal communication, and it is possible that the lack of images or videos in the questionnaire may have limited the impact of CSR manipulation on participant responses. (Hewlett-Packard Development Company, 2004)

Overall, these limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of the study and when planning future research on the topic.

As a future research recommendation, it may be useful to examine the effects of CSR manipulations in a more realistic context, where consumers are more actively involved in a simulation of a real purchase decision and to consider the use of visual communication. This could help to provide a more accurate and significant portrayal of consumer reactions to CSR initiatives.

It would also be beneficial to further study the combination of the clothing condition and CSR condition to better understand how these variables interact and impact consumer perceptions. There are several ways in which future research could examine the combination of the clothing condition and CSR condition to better understand how these variables interact and impact consumer perceptions. Here are a few examples:

1. A study could use a qualitative research design, such as focus groups or in-depth interviews, to explore consumer perceptions and attitudes towards the combination of clothing and CSR. This could provide a more in-depth understanding of the factors

that influence consumer reactions to these variables and the underlying mechanisms that drive these reactions.

2. A study could examine real-world data on consumer purchasing behavior and compare the impact of different combinations of clothing and CSR on consumer purchasing decisions. This could help to identify any real-world effects of these variables on consumer behavior and provide insights into the practical implications of these findings for marketers and CSR practitioners.

The findings of the research suggest that it is important to consider the specific market segment and product when designing marketing strategies and CSR initiatives, as consumer reactions may vary in these different contexts. Future research could help to explore the ways in which segment and clothing type impact consumer perceptions and responses, as well as to identify any potential moderating factors that may influence these relationships. This could inform the development of more targeted and effective marketing and CSR strategies.

Conclusions

There are constant issues about how firms might incorporate CSR concepts and practices into their business goals, and this study attempted to provide some answers.

Based on the results of the study, it appears that individuals are generally sensitive to information about CSR and that this can impact their perceptions of a brand's products. Specifically, the presence of CSR information was associated with higher levels of response to the variables being studied, and this impact was particularly pronounced for perceptions of product uniqueness and quality. Also, the combination of the clothing condition and CSR condition had a significant effect on perceived uniqueness and purchasing predisposition, although the specific pattern of this effect varied depending on the type of clothing being evaluated.

However, it is important to note that the effects of CSR on consumer perceptions were generally weak and not statistically significant when examined alone. This suggests that other factors may be at play in influencing consumer reactions to CSR information and that the impact of CSR on brand perception may be more complex than initially hypothesized.

Additionally, the segment and clothing conditions significantly impacted consumer perceptions, indicating that these factors should be considered when designing marketing and CSR strategies. The results suggest that consumer responses may vary depending on the specific market segment and the product being evaluated and that it is important to tailor marketing and CSR efforts to the specific context in which they will be presented.

Overall, the results of the study provide valuable insights into the impact of CSR on consumer perceptions and the ways in which different factors may influence these reactions. While the effects of CSR on brand perception were generally weak, the findings suggest that further research on this topic could be valuable in understanding the complex relationship between CSR and consumer responses. This can be useful for companies looking to improve their marketing strategies and understand how different CSR practices, brand segments, and clothing options impact consumer perceptions and behaviors. It may also be of interest to researchers studying consumer psychology and the role of CSR in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions.

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Appendix Index

Appendix I – Survey Portuguese Version

Appendix II – Survey English Version

Appendix III – Description of Variables

Appendix I – Survey Portuguese Version

Q1. Caro participante,

Este questionário é parte integrante da investigação para a minha dissertação do mestrado em Business, realizado na Universidade Católica Portuguesa de Lisboa. O objetivo desta pesquisa é avaliar como os consumidores do mercado português percecionam as práticas corporativas socialmente responsáveis da indústria da moda.

Os resultados obtidos serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos e as respostas são anónimas. Leia cada pergunta com atenção e selecione a resposta que você acredita que melhor se aplica. O preenchimento do questionário demora cerca de 5 a 10 minutos.

Ao clicar no botão abaixo, reconhece que a sua participação no estudo é voluntária, que tem 18 anos de idade e que está ciente de que pode optar por encerrar a sua participação no estudo a qualquer momento e por qualquer razão.

Obrigado pela sua participação nesta pesquisa.

Qualquer dúvida contactar o email s-raamarques@ucp.pt.

- Entendi as instruções e concordo em participar neste estudo;
- Não entendi as instruções / Não concordo em participar neste estudo.

Q2. Atualmente, vive em portugal?

- Sim
- Não

Boas Notícias!

Ao responder a este questionário fica habilitado a ganhar um cartão oferta com o valor de 10€ que pode utilizar nas lojas FNAC.

Para participar basta partilhar o seu email no final do questionário. O email será usado unicamente no sorteio e na posterior comunicação com o vencedor.

Só é válida uma participação por pessoa. Boa sorte!

Sócio-Demográficas

Q3. Qual é o seu género?

- Masculino
- Feminino
- Não binário

Q4. Qual é a sua idade?

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 74
- 75 – 84
- 85 ou mais

Q5. Qual o nível de escolaridade mais elevado que completou?

- Nenhum
- Ensino básico 1º ciclo (atual 4o ano/antiga instrução primária/4a classe)
- Ensino básico 2º ciclo (atual 6o ano/antigo ciclo preparatório)
- Ensino básico 3º ciclo (atual 9o ano / antigo 5o liceal)
- Ensino secundário (atual 12o ano/ antigo 7o liceal /ano propedêutico)

- Ensino pós-secundário (Cursos de especialização tecnológica não superior)
- Curso técnico superior profissional
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

Avaliação de Brand Relevance

Q6. De acordo com as suas experiências de compra, diga qual é o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes frases.

- A marca desempenha um papel significativo quanto ao grau de satisfação que tenho com o produto.
- Quando compro, concentro-me principalmente na marca.
- Para mim, é importante comprar um produto de marca.
- Quando compro roupa ou acessórios a marca desempenha, em comparação com outras coisas, um papel importante.

Instruções tarefa

Em seguida vão ser apresentados várias imagens de peças de roupa de diferentes marcas. Vai ter de escolher a peça de roupa que mais lhe agrada e, em seguida, vai ser questionado sobre a escolha que fez.

Na escolha não tenha em consideração o preço da peça ou a sua disponibilidade monetária.

Table 1: The texts about brands randomly shown to participants.

	Primark	Kiabi	Lefties
Discount	Primark é um retalhista internacional de artigos de vestuário e cosméticos	Patrick Mulliez criou a loja de moda francesa KIABI em 1978 em Roncq, França. A KIABI fabrica vestuário,	Lefties é uma das marcas de fast-fashion mais proeminentes em Espanha e em todo o

	especializado em fast-fashion. Em 1969, a Associated British Foods estreou-se como Penneys na Irlanda. Com o lema "grande vestuário a preços fantásticos", a Primark tornou-se uma das maiores empresas de fast-fashion do mundo.	acessórios, calçado, fatos de banho, jóias, e cosméticos. O seu lema, "Moda a preços modestos" (La mode à petits prix), faz parte da abordagem de marketing que reflecte o posicionamento da marca.	mundo. Lefties destina-se a todos os demográficos e a todas as idades: Mulheres, homens, raparigas, rapazes e bebés têm cada um a sua própria coleção de vestuário e calçado. A linha de produtos Lefties inclui também as linhas Homewear, Sportswear e Underwear.
Mid-Range	ZARA	H&M	Mango
	Zara é uma marca espanhola de fast fashion. Concentra-se no design, fabrico, distribuição e venda a retalho através de uma vasta rede de retalho. Zara vende vestuário, acessórios, calçado, fatos de banho, produtos cosméticos e fragrâncias. É uma empresa global e diversificada com lojas nas principais cidades do mundo e online que oferece as últimas tendências da moda para mulheres, homens e crianças.	A H&M é um retalhista internacional sueco de vestuário de fast-fashion para. Os estilos variam desde colecções para festas até ao essencial intemporal e ao atletismo utilitário - para mulheres, homens, adolescentes, e crianças, e para qualquer estação ou evento. Para além de vestuário, calçado, malas, jóias, cosméticos e roupa interior, a H&M oferece também uma selecção de artigos para o lar chamada H&M Home.	Mango é uma empresa espanhola de fabrico e design de vestuário formada pelos irmãos Isak Andic e Nahman Andic em Barcelona, Espanha. A marca cria, fabrica e vende vestuário e acessórios para mulheres e homens. Design, inovação e tecnologia estão no centro da abordagem comercial da Mango, tornando-a uma das marcas de moda de topo da Europa.
Luxury	Versace	Prada	Gucci
	Versace , fundada em Milão em 1978, é uma das maiores empresas mundiais de design de moda e um ícone global do luxo italiano. Cria, produz, distribui, e vende artigos de moda e estilo de vida. A marca é reconhecida pelos seus desenhos vívidos e cores vibrantes.	Prada é uma casa de moda de luxo italiana fundada em 1913 em Milão por Mario Prada. É conhecida pelas suas bolsas de couro, artigos de viagem, sapatos, vestuário, e outros acessórios de moda. Prada é também conhecida pelos seus artigos elegantes e de alta gama, tanto para homens como para mulheres.	Gucci é uma marca de moda premium italiana com sede em Florença, Itália. Malas, vestuário, calçado, acessórios e decoração estão entre as suas categorias de produtos. A empresa é reconhecida pelos seus designs ecléticos e modernos, que reflectem o auge do trabalho italiano em termos de qualidade, atenção aos detalhes, e design inventivo.

Table 2: The CSR texts randomly shown to participants.

Environment	Este fabricante emprega uma elevada proporção de recursos ecológicos, tais como o algodão da Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), para a produção do
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	<p>produto representado. A sua utilização de materiais amigos do ambiente diminui o seu efeito climático e reduz a quantidade de químicos, água e águas residuais utilizadas no seu fabrico. Além disso, a empresa emprega energia renovável na sua cadeia de fornecimento para diminuir o seu efeito ambiental.</p>
<p>Diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>Globalmente, a marca promove uma cultura de inclusão, igualdade e respeito. Dedicam-se à construção de culturas de trabalho justas que fomentam a tolerância e a aceitação, permitindo a todos alcançar os seus objetivos e desenvolver as suas capacidades.</p>
<p>Product</p>	<p>O produto apresentado tem o selo "Portugal Sou Eu", que identifica e certifica produtos e serviços nacionais com elevada incorporação nacional. Quando adquirimos produtos ou serviços com este selo, temos a garantia de contribuir para melhorar a competitividade das empresas, criando empregos e contribuindo para uma economia mais sustentável.</p>

Variáveis Dependentes

Q7. Exprese as suas atitudes em relação à marca anteriormente mencionada (Attitude toward the company). Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Negativa/Positiva
- Desagradável/Agradável
- Inútil/Valiosa
- Má/Boa

- Desfavorável/Favorável
- Não gosto muito/Gosto muito.

Q8. Descreva a **marca** anteriormente mencionada (Trustworthiness). Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Desonesta/Honesta.
- Insincera/Sincera.
- Manipulativa/Não manipulativa.
- Não confiável/Confiável

Q9. Expresse **o quanto concorda** com as declarações seguintes (Attitude toward the brand's price). 1- Discordo totalmente 7- Concordo totalmente.

- A marca tem preços atrativos.
- Os produtos da marca são uma boa compra.
- A marca está disponível por preços razoáveis.

Q10. Expresse as suas opiniões em relação ao **produto** anteriormente escolhido (Uniqueness of the object). 1- Discordo totalmente 7- Concordo totalmente.

- Considero a peça de roupa como única.
- A peça de roupa é diferente de outras que já tive.
- A peça de roupa é diferente.

Q11. Tendo a **marca** anteriormente mencionada em mente expresse o quanto concorda com as declarações (Quality of the retailer's products). 1- Discordo totalmente 7- Concordo totalmente.

- É provável que os produtos vendidos pela marca sejam bem feitos.
- Os produtos vendidos pela marca funcionarão como pretendido.
- É provável que os produtos tenham uma longa duração.
- É provável que a marca dê ênfase à qualidade do produto.

Q12. Qual seria a probabilidade de **comprar o produto** selecionado? (Willingness to purchase). Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Pouco provável que compre que compre o produto.
- Muito provável que compre o produto o produto.

Appendix II – Survey English Version

Q1. Dear participant,

This questionnaire is an integral part of the research for my master's dissertation in Business, conducted at the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon. The aim of this research is to evaluate how consumers in the Portuguese market perceive the socially responsible corporate practices of the fashion industry.

The results obtained will be used only for academic purposes and the responses are anonymous. Please read each question carefully and select the answer that you believe best applies. Completing the questionnaire takes about 5 to 10 minutes.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, that you are 18 years of age and that you are aware that you can choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have any questions, please contact s-raamarques@ucp.pt.

- I understood the instructions and agreed to participate in this study.
- I did not understand the instructions / I do not agree to participate in this study.

Q2. Do you currently live in Portugal?

- Yes
- No.

Good news! By responding to this questionnaire, you are eligible to win a gift card worth 10€ that you can use in FNAC stores. To participate, simply share your email at the end of the

questionnaire. The email will only be used for the draw and for subsequent communication with the winner. Only one participation per person is valid. Good luck!

Sócio-Demográficas

Q3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary

Q4. What is your age?

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 74
- 75 – 84
- 85 or above

Q5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- None
- Primary education (1st cycle)
- Primary education (2nd cycle)
- Primary education (3rd cycle)
- Secondary education
- Post-secondary education (non-degree technical courses)

- Professional technical higher education
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate

Brand relevance evaluation

Q6. According to your shopping experiences, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- When I purchase a product in the given category, the brand plays, compared to other things, an important role.
- When purchasing, I focus mainly on the brand.
- To me, it is important to purchase a brand name product.
- The brand plays a significant role as to how satisfied I am with the product.

Task instructions

You will be presented with several images of clothing from different brands. You will have to choose the piece of clothing that you like the most and then you will be asked about your choice.

Do not consider the price of the item or your monetary availability when making your choice.

Table 3: The texts about brands randomly shown to participants.

	Primark	Kiabi	Lefties
Discount	Primark is an international retailer of clothing and cosmetics specializing in fast fashion. In 1969, Associated British Foods debuted as Penneys in Ireland. With the motto "great clothing at	Patrick Mulliez created the French fashion store KIABI in 1978 in Roncq, France. KIABI manufactures clothing, accessories, footwear, swimwear, jewelry, and cosmetics. Its motto, "Fashion at modest prices"	Lefties is one of the most prominent fast fashion brands in Spain and around the world. Lefties is intended for all demographics and all ages: Women, men, girls, boys, and

	fantastic prices," Primark has become one of the largest fast fashion companies in the world.	(La mode à petits prix), is part of the marketing approach that reflects the brand's positioning.	babies each have their own collection of clothing and footwear. The Lefties product line also includes the Homewear, Sportswear, and Underwear lines.
Mid-Range	ZARA	H&M	Mango
	Zara is a Spanish fast fashion brand. It focuses on design, manufacture, distribution, and retail sale through a wide retail network. Zara sells clothing, accessories, footwear, swimwear, cosmetics, and fragrances. It is a global and diversified company with stores in major cities around the world and online that offers the latest fashion trends for women, men, and children.	H&M is a Swedish international retailer of fast fashion clothing. The styles range from party collections to timeless essentials and utility athleisure - for women, men, teens, and children, and for any season or occasion. In addition to clothing, footwear, bags, jewelry, cosmetics, and lingerie, H&M also offers a selection of home goods called H&M Home.	Mango is a Spanish clothing design and manufacturing company founded by brothers Isak Andic and Nahman Andic in Barcelona, Spain. The brand creates, manufactures, and sells clothing and accessories for women and men. Design, innovation, and technology are at the center of Mango's business approach, making it one of the top fashion brands in Europe.
Luxury	Versace	Prada	Gucci
	Versace, founded in Milan in 1978, is one of the world's largest fashion design companies and a global icon of Italian luxury. It creates, produces, distributes, and sells fashion and lifestyle products. The brand is known for its vivid designs and vibrant colors.	Prada is an Italian luxury fashion house founded in 1913 in Milan by Mario Prada. It is known for its leather handbags, travel articles, shoes, clothing, and other fashion accessories. Prada is also known for its elegant, high-end items for both men and women.	Gucci is an Italian premium fashion brand based in Florence, Italy. Bags, clothing, footwear, accessories, and home decor are among its product categories. The company is known for its eclectic and modern designs, which reflect the pinnacle of Italian craftsmanship in terms of quality, attention to detail, and innovative design.

Table 4: The CSR texts randomly shown to participants.

Environment	This manufacturer employs a high proportion of eco-friendly resources, such as Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) cotton, in the production of the represented
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	<p>product. Its use of environmentally friendly materials reduces its climate impact and reduces the amount of chemicals, water, and wastewater used in its manufacture. In addition, the company uses renewable energy in its supply chain to reduce its environmental impact.</p>
<p>Diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>Globally, the brand promotes a culture of inclusion, equality, and respect. They are dedicated to building fair work cultures that foster tolerance and acceptance, allowing everyone to achieve their goals and develop their abilities.</p>
<p>Product</p>	<p>The presented product has the "Portugal Sou Eu" label, which identifies and certifies national products and services with high national incorporation. When we purchase products or services with this label, we can be sure to contribute to improving the competitiveness of companies, creating jobs, and contributing to a more sustainable economy.</p>

Variáveis Dependentes

Q7. Express your attitudes towards the previously mentioned brand. (Attitude toward the company). Seven-point response format.

- Negative / Positive
- Unpleasant / Pleasant
- Worthless / Valuable
- Bad / Good
- Unfavorable / Favorable

- Dislike a lot / Like a lot

Q8. Describe the previously mentioned brand. (Trustworthiness). Seven-point response format.

- Dishonest / Honest.
- Insincere / Sincere.
- Manipulative / Not Manipulative.
- Not trustworthy / Trustworthy.

Q9. Express how much you agree with the following statements (Attitude toward the brand's price). 1- Strongly disagree 7- Strongly agree.

- The brand has attractive prices.
- The brand's products are a good buy.
- The brand is available at reasonable prices.

Q10. Express your opinions on the previously chosen product (Uniqueness of the object). 1- Strongly disagree 7- Strongly agree.

- I consider the piece of clothing to be unique.
- The piece of clothing is different from others that I have had.
- The piece of clothing is distinct.

Q11. Based on the previously mentioned brand, express how much you agree with the statements about the quality of the retailer's products. 1- Disagree completely 7- Agree completely.

- It is likely that the products sold by the brand are well-made.

- The products sold by the brand will function as intended.
- It is likely that the products will have a long lifespan.
- It is likely that the brand places emphasis on product quality.

Q12. What is the likelihood of purchasing the selected product? (Willingness to purchase).

Seven-point response format.

- very unlikely to buy this product.
- very likely to buy this product.

Appendix III – Description of Variables

Table 5: Attitude Toward the Company (ATC)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
Negative / Positive	2.47%	2.47%	3.09%	25.31%	21.60%	26.85%	18.21%	5.15	1.41
Unpleasant / Pleasant	3.09%	2.16%	1.85%	26.23%	23.46%	27.78%	15.43%	5.10	1.38
Worthless / Valuable	4.32%	2.47%	5.25%	30.86%	24.38%	19.44%	13.27%	4.80	1.46
Bad / Good	4.01%	1.54%	2.47%	27.78%	25.62%	25.93%	12.65%	4.98	1.39
Unfavorable / Favorable	3.70%	1.23%	4.01%	26.85%	23.46%	27.16%	13.58%	5.01	1.40
Dislike a lot / Like a lot	4.32%	3.70%	5.25%	26.54%	25.62%	19.44%	15.12%	4.84	1.51

Table 6: Trustworthiness (TRU)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
Dishonest / Honest.	4.32%	3.40%	3.40%	30.86%	22.53%	25.00%	12.65%	4.92	1.42
Insincere / Sincere	4.32%	0.93%	3.09%	32.72%	23.15%	23.77%	12.04%	4.89	1.39
Manipulative / Not Manipulative	4.63%	3.09%	8.95%	34.88%	20.99%	17.90%	9.57%	4.56	1.45
Not trustworthy / Trustworthy	4.63%	1.23%	4.01%	28.09%	24.07%	23.46%	14.51%	4.94	1.45

Table 7: Attitude toward the brand's price (ATP)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
The brand has attractive prices.	10.49%	10.19%	8.95%	11.73%	19.44%	25.31%	13.89%	4.51	1.91
The brand's products are a good buy.	2.16%	2.78%	5.25%	22.84%	31.17%	29.01%	6.79%	4.92	1.26
The brand is available at reasonable prices.	12.65%	7.72%	8.02%	12.65%	23.15%	23.15%	12.65%	4.46	1.90

Table 8: Uniqueness of the object (UNQ)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
I consider the piece of clothing to be unique.	22.22%	27.16%	11.11%	12.96%	15.43%	9.26%	1.85%	3.07	1.74
The piece of clothing is different from others that I have had.	18.83%	30.25%	13.89%	12.04%	11.42%	11.11%	2.47%	3.10	1.74
The piece of clothing is distinct.	21.30%	32.41%	11.73%	11.42%	12.35%	8.64%	2.16%	2.96	1.71

Table 9: Quality of the retailer's products (QUA)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
It is likely that the products sold by the brand are well-made.	0.62%	4.32%	7.41%	16.36%	25.62%	33.95%	11.73%	5.11	1.32
The products sold by the brand will function as intended.	0	0.62%	3.09%	16.98%	25.00%	44.75%	9.57%	5.39	1.02
It is likely that the products will have a long lifespan.	3.40%	5.56%	11.11%	16.98%	26.54%	25.93%	10.49%	4.77	1.51
It is likely that the brand places emphasis on product quality.	3.40%	4.63%	11.73%	16.98%	20.06%	30.86%	12.35%	4.88	1.55

Table 10: Willingness to purchase (WTP)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
very unlikely to buy this product / very likely to buy this product.	19.75%	9.26%	7.72%	13.27%	22.84%	15.43%	11.73%	4.03	2.03