



CSR authenticity and consumers' attitudes in the context of food waste – the case study of Too Good To Go

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ABSTRACT

In a society that is becoming increasingly demanding with the corporate world, it is important to discern which direction companies must take in order to generate more positive attitudes among consumers in what concerns CSR endeavours. Indeed, consumers' perceptions towards CSR are showing more and more inconsistencies, but the concept of authenticity might help mitigating the contradictions. This study focuses on understanding if having CSR deeply embedded in the business affects consumers' perceptions about the authenticity of companies' CSR actions. This is achieved through individual interviews with consumers of a company that has its roots in socially responsible behaviour. Too Good To Go created a possible solution to fight food waste and turned it into its core business. This dissertation develops a case study based on how this company conducts its business and how this innovative approach affects authenticity perceptions and consumer behaviour, consequently. Results show that consumers tend to be more sceptical, instead of considering companies' actions authentic. Even though companies that were born with socially responsible purposes have better chances of being perceived as authentic, the corporate world has lost consumers' trust and it needs to redirect the way it conducts business in the long-run. Insights from consumers resulted in some implications regarding CSR and suggestions on how to improve CSR authenticity perceptions.

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RESUMO

Numa sociedade que se está a tornar mais exigente com o mundo corporativo, é importante distinguir qual a direção que deve ser tomada pelas empresas, de modo a gerar atitudes mais positivas entre consumidores no que toca a esforços de RSC. De facto, as perspetivas dos consumidores em relação a RSC mostram cada vez mais inconsistências, mas o conceito de autenticidade pode ajudar a atenuar tais contradições. Este estudo foca-se em perceber se ter RSC profundamente enraizado no negócio afeta as perceções dos consumidores sobre a autenticidade das ações de RSC. Isto é alcançado através de entrevistas individuais com consumidores de uma empresa que tem como base comportamento socialmente responsável. A Too Good To Go criou uma possível solução para combater o desperdício alimentar e tornou-a no seu negócio principal. Esta dissertação desenvolve um caso de estudo baseado na orientação do seu negócio e em como esta abordagem inovadora afeta perceções de autenticidade e o comportamento do consumidor, consequentemente. Os resultados mostram que os consumidores tendem a ser mais céticos, em vez de considerar as ações das empresas autênticas. Ainda que as empresas nascidas de um propósito socialmente responsável tenham melhores hipóteses de serem vistas como autênticas, o mundo corporativo perdeu a confiança dos consumidores e precisa de redirecionar a maneira como orienta os negócios a longo prazo. O conhecimento adquirido dos consumidores resultou em implicações relativamente a RSC e sugestões sobre como melhorar as perceções de autenticidade de RSC.

Título: Autenticidade de RSC e atitudes dos consumidores no contexto de desperdício alimentar – o caso de estudo da Too Good To Go

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Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade Social Corporativa, Autenticidade de Responsabilidade Social Corporativa, Confiança, Perceções do Consumidor, Desperdício Alimentar

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B – Business to Business

B2C – Business to Consumer

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

FSC – Food Supply Chain

TGTG – Too Good To Go

1. INTRODUCTION

How many of us have actually stopped for a minute to think about the food being wasted every day? How many of us have tried to do something about it? This dissertation deals with this global issue and with one of the companies working towards a future with no food waste: TGTG.

Food waste has severe social impacts and environmental consequences in terms of carbon emissions or water waste (Secondi et al., 2015). It is a problem that has every reason to be under the public eye during recent years and it deserves some immediate action. A part of the solution can result from companies' food waste related CSR activities that can help improving societal and environmental standards. Indeed, CSR literature states that consumers can show more support for companies for which they hold more positive CSR perceptions (Marín et al., 2016). However, the literature also states that consumers can show scepticism and mistrust towards companies engaging in CSR initiatives (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015).

Authenticity can help to disentangle the positive from the negative impacts of CSR and help to set a business case for food waste related CSR activities. The search for authenticity is escalating (Liedtka, 2008) and companies must take that into consideration when conducting business and implementing their CSR efforts. As some scholars argue, the purpose of businesses needs to change and "learning how to create shared value is our best chance to legitimise business again" (Porter & Kramer, 2011). TGTG is the representation of this idea, as it was born from the fight against food waste. Its business approach is innovative and part of the effort on creating a new perception wave inside consumers' minds, changing thoughts and attitudes towards the corporate realm.

The literature overflows with information about how consumers look at CSR initiatives coming as a complementary focus of the business. However, little is known about companies like TGTG, especially when it comes to food waste related CSR, as it is a topic that gained exposure rather recently. Although it might seem that this type of business "may better lend themselves to authenticity" (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015), having an advantage over others, companies still need to be careful about how they operate and communicate, if being perceived as handling authentic CSR is something that matters for them.

Understanding consumers' perceptions towards firms engaging in CSR and how companies that have CSR embedded in their activities can influence consumers' perception on CSR authenticity are the key goals of this dissertation. This discussion is developed in the context of

food waste, with a case study about TGTG and the way the company follows a strategy that has a social initiative right in the heart of the business.

The present study is divided into six distinct sections. The chapter that follows is the literature review that covers the existing knowledge regarding the main concepts of interest. Then, the case study is presented with a deep look into the company's history and how it operates. Data was collected through interviews conducted with TGTG's consumers, so both the methodology used and the results of the research are displayed in two following sections. Lastly, some conclusions are presented, including the main findings based on the case study and the results obtained from the interviews, as well as some limitations that the research might face and a few suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides an introductory outlook about the main concepts being approached in this study. Some still generate discussion among scholars, so it is particularly important to distinguish these topics and existing points of view.

2.1 The food waste problem

According to the World Food Programme (2020), if the current trend remains, there will be 840 million hungry people in the world. One part of the planet is still defined by lack of food security, hunger and few resources for the corresponding population growth, while the other part looks at problems like obesity and over-supply of food (Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the developed world still has many people that do not have equitable access to food, while tons are being wasted every single day, with Portugal being one of the European countries where this inconsistency stands out the most (Cicatiello et al., 2016). Food waste is a term that brings up some discussion regarding its definition (Buzby & Hyman, 2012). For this study, food waste is considered a subset of food loss, when an edible item goes to waste due to human action or inaction (Cicatiello et al., 2016). This represents a huge problem not only for society and the environment, but also for the economy (Stöckli et al., 2018).

Although food waste occurs across all stages of the FSC (Schanes & Stagl, 2019), it is more evident in the end, during the retailer-consumer connection (Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2017). For example, predicting the number of customers is a challenging task that often leads to overstocking and over-preparation (Buzby & Hyman, 2012). Therefore, decreasing food waste in developed countries relies heavily upon retailers, food services and consumers as well (Parfitt et al., 2010), since they are the big generators of food waste (Thyberg & Tonjes, 2016).

The interest in fighting this issue is growing among policy makers (Stancu et al., 2016), but good results rest on everyone's actions. The world is witnessing an increasing number of initiatives and movements that focus on minimising the impacts of food waste (Cane & Parra, 2020), which suggests that people are escalating their efforts and getting more involved.

2.2 Engaging people

Involvement can be referred to as personal relevance, being “considered a personal connection or bridging experience for an individual” (Grau & Folse, 2007). In its turn, personal relevance comprises values, needs and interests, as well as the perceived level of one's interest and/or importance generated by stimulus that are circumstance specific (Patel et al., 2017). So, this study recognises the definition of social cause involvement used by Grau & Folse (2007), being

the level of personal relevance that a social cause conveys to the consumer, which can be a result of experiences with the cause from their past or can simply be part of their self-concept.

Involved consumers acknowledge the support given by the company to the cause and, consequently, they are more likely to make great efforts to further the cause with their participation (Grau & Folse, 2007). Castaldo et al. (2009) mention that products that have ethical and social values associated “will primarily appeal to consumers interested in specific issues or who are particularly sensitive to ethical aspects of purchasing”. Also, Alhouti et al. (2016) state that, when consumers like the cause and find it important, they assume that it is also more authentic. Therefore, this is an incentive for firms to create a close connection with a social purpose, especially one that has shown a good level of involvement from the target consumer.

2.3 Engaging businesses

The interest in CSR has been accelerating and, as it becomes more extensive, so does the number of different conceptualisations (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). This paper adopts the definition used by Bhattacharya et al. (2009), which claims that CSR is a commitment to enhance society’s well-being through business practices supported by corporate resources. It encourages companies to take responsibility for more than their economic activity, acknowledging its effect on society and the environment (Tata & Prasad, 2015).

A study conducted in Europe shows that 70% of consumers find CSR to be important when selecting a product or a service (Singh et al., 2012). It is believed that CSR has the power to positively influence consumers’ evaluations of a business (Bhattacharya et al., 2009) and consumers are more willing to support companies engaging in CSR activities than the ones that do not (Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). It has been further revealed that such initiatives can be a source of competitive advantage for firms (Marín et al., 2016), since stakeholders will look at them as a “preferred party to have transactions with” (Castaldo et al., 2009). Moreover, if a competitor with bad CSR reputation tries to replicate the business or the product of a company with good CSR ideals, it will never achieve the same level of success, because their notoriety hinders the process of convincing people about them being able to keep up with ethical standards (Castaldo et al., 2009). But behaving in a socially responsible way is not sufficient to achieve success in this area, CSR actions have to be credible, show that they benefit society and be perceived as authentic (Alhouti et al., 2016).

Implementing and managing the engagement of CSR initiatives are often complex tasks (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Moreover, the effects of CSR reputation on consumers do not seem to be universal yet and the levels of significance also fluctuate (Castaldo et al., 2009). The public is still suspicious about the real reasons why firms engage in CSR, since “corporate scandals, ethical lapses, broad cynicism and anxiety for contemporary life” (Vlachos et al., 2009) are a reality. There are numerous examples of firms that seem to be good corporate citizens and whose CSR rankings are exemplary, but then their subsequent actions end up heavily jeopardising stakeholders, creating a gap between companies and society (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015).

Overall, it looks like the world is facing a contradiction. While CSR is a leading instrument to achieve societal benefits and to address stakeholder concerns, CSR efforts are increasingly seen as a way of hiding companies’ societal harms and as an action of self-interest masked as benevolence (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015). The notion of authenticity might bring some light into this modern paradox (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015).

2.4 How to make it work

2.4.1 CSR authenticity

Authenticity is a factor that has been identified as crucial when it comes to the success of CSR initiatives and that has been found to have an impact on the benefits that arise from these programs (Joo et al., 2019). The concept “involves both owning one’s personal experiences and acting in accordance with one’s true self” (Gardner et al., 2005). The search for this connection is growing inside developed societies (Liedtka, 2008), as they witness a consumer culture that emphasises consumption, producing a sense of estrangement (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015), along with the fear of destruction of meaning and freedom (Liedtka, 2008).

CSR authenticity has been described as “the perception of a company’s CSR actions as a genuine and true expression of the company’s beliefs and behavior toward society that extend beyond legal requirements” (Alhouti et al., 2016). However, this is a concept that depends not only on the firm itself, but also on the validation of its stakeholders (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015), since authenticity is a claim that requires acceptance or rejection by relevant others (Peterson, 2005). The difference between what is authentic and what is not is usually subjective and constructed within social or personal boundaries (Napoli et al., 2014), but some literature has tried gathering aspects that influence authenticity and that seem to be common across individuals (Alhouti et al., 2016; Beckman et al., 2009; Joo et al., 2019).

Joo et al. (2019) conceptualise a multidimensional construct focused on CSR authenticity from the consumers' perspective, including seven different but interconnected dimensions that influence perceptions of CSR authenticity, presented below.

Table 1 – Dimensions of CSR authenticity

Community link	Mazutis & Slawinski (2015) refer to this dimension as social connectedness and indicate that it is of great importance when it comes to perceptions of authenticity, since one needs to be true to oneself without letting go of this social link. Being the perceived level of connection between CSR activities and the community, community link is what demonstrates that the company is interested in benefitting the people of that local community (Joo et al., 2019). Thus, authenticity is dependent on how tailored to local social needs the initiative is (Beckman et al., 2009).
Reliability	Reliability is related to the perceived gap between what a CSR program promises to do and what it actually does (Joo et al., 2019). The smaller the gap, the stronger the consistency between words and actions. Beckman et al. (2009) argue that, if firms want to be considered as authentic in their CSR practices, they need to be consistent across all aspects of the business, incorporating socially responsible behaviour in everything that is done. When companies do not take this seriously, inconsistencies can not only negatively affect consumers' CSR beliefs, but also have consequences in their future purchase patterns (Wagner et al., 2009).
Commitment	The same way that commitment is thought to be one of the characteristics that influence brand authenticity (Napoli et al., 2014), the concept also plays an important role in evaluating the authenticity of CSR activities (Joo et al., 2019). Commitment can be described as the perceived dedication that a company puts into its consistent CSR endeavours (Joo et al., 2019) and this stability avoids the opportunistic looks that a certain initiative might receive, since it shows the willingness of a firm to do good over time (Godfrey, 2005). So, it is important that the firm strongly displays a genuine commitment to the social cause that is in the centre of its initiatives (Beckman et al., 2009).
Congruence	<p>According to Joo et al. (2019), congruence is a dimension that is related with distinctiveness and fit. Cause-company fit is the perceived degree of connection between the core of the company and the cause it has chosen to support (Lafferty, 2007). This alignment between the brand's concept and the CSR initiative is another vital dimension for consumers to perceive the action as authentic (Alhouti et al., 2016). Hoeffler & Keller (2002) review how brands can decide on a cause and discuss the commonality strategy, which consists of choosing a cause with which the company has identical associations and responses.</p> <p>Moreover, congruence theory helps explaining the effects of fit, by pointing out that the perceived similarity helps both storing and getting back information from one's memory (Lafferty, 2007). Hence, it has been revealed that a greater cause-company fit is capable of promoting more positive evaluations about the firm, as well as of shaping perceived motives (Barone et al., 2007). Consequently, credibility and attitudes towards the company will be influenced (Barone et al., 2007).</p>

Benevolence	Perceived motives can either be altruistic or egoistic, with the former improving CSR perception and the latter creating a feeling of deceit and manipulation among consumers (Bigné et al., 2012). Benevolence is associated with perceived altruism of CSR initiatives as opposed to profit seeking motives (Joo et al., 2019), so it is possible to assume that benevolence positively affects the way people see these actions. Alhouti et al. (2016) employ persuasion knowledge theory and attribution theory to report that the knowledge that a person has about a company and its marketing strategy is key for them to evaluate whether CSR is based on self-serving or public-serving motives.
Transparency	Transparency can be defined as the accessibility that stakeholders have to information regarding the past, current and future CSR initiatives (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015), being particularly relevant when there is a high level of mistrust among stakeholders (Joo et al., 2019). Beckman et al. (2009) argues that the company's activities must be transparent in order to be regarded as authentic and this is not only about having a sustainability report, it is about opening up the firm to employees and external communities.
Broad impact	The concept of impact is related to whether or not consumers think the initiative is actually making a significant difference and whether or not the company is showing enough devotion to the cause (Alhouti et al., 2016). Broad impact further includes the perception of the CSR initiative benefiting a big number of individuals, since the biggest the group of people impacted, the biggest the level of perceived authenticity (Joo et al., 2019).

2.4.2 Brand trust

Brand trust can be defined as the willingness to believe in a brand, considering the consumer's views on that brand and forgetting about the uncertainty that might be connected to it (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). It is established based on previous consumption experience (Fatma & Rahman, 2017) and affected by interactions consumers have with other stakeholders and the public opinion (Singh et al., 2012). Singh et al. (2012) argue that brand trust further depends on several aspects, such as perceptions of fairness, no opportunistic behaviour, responsibility and accountability for the firm's behaviour towards a big audience. Likewise, brand trust transcends expectations about the attributes and performance of a product, comprising emotional evaluations, therefore including both cognitive beliefs and affective perceptions (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Benevolence and reliability are considered two of the several facets of trust (Singh et al., 2012), concepts which were previously mentioned when discussing CSR authenticity, showing a connection between the two notions. Also, Stanaland et al. (2011) mention that a company that is considered socially responsible is likely to improve trust among and between all stakeholders. Additionally, if consumers find a brand to be trustworthy, then they value the relationship created with it and try to preserve it by showing their affinity with the trusted brand (Becerra &

Badrinarayanan, 2013). In other words, having brand trust means that consumers have good opinions about the brand, so they will be proud of identifying themselves with the company (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

2.4.3 Consumer-company identification

Some of the strongest relationships between consumers and companies come from consumers' identification with the firm, which allows them to answer to their self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). This study considers the definition adopted by Currás-Pérez et al. (2009), who state that “consumer-company identification is a cognitive state of self-categorisation, connection and proximity of the consumer to a company”, which results from a comparison between identities of both the company and the consumer. This concept is supported by theories of social identity and organisational identification (Deng & Xu, 2017). The first one presupposes that individuals express their sense of self by creating a social identity that surpasses their personal identity and the second one relates to an individual's perception of wholeness with the company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

Consumers' identification depends mainly on their perceptions of the company's core and distinctive characteristics (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Actually, CSR is among the many aspects that have a meaningful effect in trying to stimulate the consumer-company identification (Deng & Xu, 2017). This concept is something that companies aspire to bring to life, since it has been proven that it produces positive results for the company in question, such as the alignment of the consumer's behaviour with the company's goals (Currás-Pérez et al., 2009).

2.4.4 Purchase intentions

One fundamental aspect of the theory of planned behaviour is the intention to behave in a certain way, as intentions are thought to be able to indicate the motivational factors behind a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Currás-Pérez et al. (2009) mention that “the main behaviour individuals can exercise in their role as consumer is product purchase”. Thus, purchase intentions are of great interest to firms, since the stronger the intentions, the stronger the possibility that an individual will actually engage in the intended behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), that is, buying the companies' products or services.

Purchase intentions can be linked with previously mentioned concepts such as CSR authenticity and consumer-company identification. Alhouti et al. (2016) show that consumers will have a positive reaction towards firms that develop authentic CSR initiatives, including what concerns

their purchase intentions. Also, when consumers identify themselves with a company, they “use consumption of its products as a way of expressing their own identity” (Currás-Pérez et al., 2009).

2.4.5 CSR integrated in the business

As mentioned before, the connection between CSR and the business itself is something that will help determining the reliability and success of CSR initiative outcomes (Yuan et al., 2011), but companies still seem to “view CSR as being divorced from prevailing business operations” (Yuan et al., 2011). Porter & Kramer (2006) further argue that having CSR approaches that are extremely fragmented and detached from the business conceal the best opportunities that companies have to benefit society.

The principle that might help companies solving this disconnection is shared value, which consists in “policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). While CSR only has a restricted connection to the business, shared value is essential for the profitability of the company and it concentrates on identifying and developing connections between the economical and societal progress (Porter & Kramer, 2011). By adopting this strategy, companies might overcome the internal consistency challenge (Yuan et al., 2011) as well, since shared value assures that societal progress is at the centre of what companies do (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

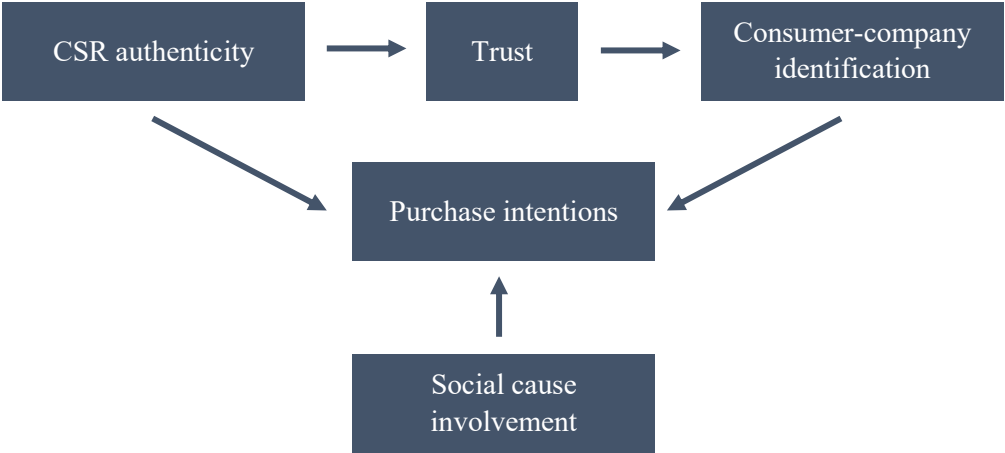
This implies a change in the business mind-set and a more sustainable view over business. It is imperative that companies adopt better practices to help protect the environment while going after their business objectives (Gazzola et al., 2019). If this is achieved, then a more sustainable economy might be on the horizon, giving priority to the maximisation of societal and environmental benefits instead of exclusive economic growth (Bocken et al., 2014). However, it is necessary that all companies engage in this effort of changing their operating standards and innovating to create space for CSR (Gazzola et al., 2019). Fortunately, many companies are already committed to a future where economic profit has no true meaning if it is not allied to social and environmental benefits, which is the case of B-corps, for example. Also known as Benefit Corporations, these for-profit companies “integrate some instances of the stakeholder theory with the shared value approach and the shareholder approach” (Gazzola et al., 2019).

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

There is plenty of literature on CSR activities and how they affect brands and their respective consumers. However, the topic of food waste as a CSR activity is just recently becoming popular. Also, most literature is directed at analysing attitudes towards CSR initiatives that represent a complementary activity inside a company and not so much when CSR is deeply embedded in the purpose of the company. This paper will focus on a specific company, TGTG, which did not only concentrate its efforts on the food waste battle, but it also made this social cause its core business. How this affects the company’s CSR authenticity and, consequently, how consumers’ perceptions towards the company are influenced will be addressed in the context of the fight against food waste.

The following conceptual model of determinants of consumer behaviour was adopted. In this model, purchase intention can be influenced by three main phenomena: CSR authenticity, consumer-company identification and social cause involvement. Importantly, CSR authenticity also influences consumer-company identification in a mediated association by trust.

Graph 1 – Conceptual model



4. CASE STUDY

Food waste has been receiving an increasingly amount of public and research attention (Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2017) and new initiatives with focus on redistributing food excess are expanding across the globe (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Bocken et al. (2014) state that although multinationals have a better chance of propelling sustainable practices at scale, new and small businesses are the ones adopting the most innovative strategies, promoting change in the short-term. TGTG can be seen as one of the companies that help supporting this claim, given its inventive approach and given the fact that it has been around for much less time than other well-established businesses. TGTG takes one solution for the food waste issue and makes it its core business. It is a company that is showing how beneficial implementing a balanced approach can be, finding an equilibrium between the search for profit and the societal gains.

Hereby, it seems that TGTG is a company worth some public attention. It originated in Northern Europe with the ultimate goal of a world free of food waste. But how does this company intend to achieve such an ambitious objective?

4.1 The problem

“Reducing food waste is one of the most important things we can do to reverse global warming.” (Chad Frischman, Climate Change Expert cited by TGTG, n.d.-b)

According to Kaza et al. (2018), 44% of the global waste that is produced comes from food and greens. Food loss and waste means waste of resources and it plays a big role in climate change, due to the emissions that result from food production and distribution (Kaza et al., 2018). While the problem in developing countries occurs in the early stages of the FSC, in developed countries the issue is more evident in the last stages, because of the decisions made by both producers and final consumers (Secondi et al., 2015). Hence, it is important to focus on the food service sector and on food wholesalers and retailers, as well as on the consumers. This way, it is possible to tackle the industry problems and at the same time raise awareness and educate the population.

4.2 Introducing TGTG

“We simply could not continue to see 1/3 of food produced thrown away, and decided that something had to be done. Because food is simply too good to go to waste.” (TGTG, n.d.-c).

TGTG was founded in Copenhagen in 2015, saving its very first meal in 2016 (Condamine, 2020). Although the idea started in Denmark with five young entrepreneurs (Murray, 2020), it “was rapidly adopted by several entrepreneurial minds around Europe”, who worked together

to come up with a solution for the common problem (TGTG, n.d.-c). TGTG is currently present in 14 European countries and in the US (Jamie Crummie, co-founder of TGTG cited by TechRound, 2020), but all local bodies work under a global structure with the same shared purpose (Condamine, 2020).

The mission is based on inspiring and empowering people to fight food waste together, while its new ambition is to make the best contribution possible to expand the global food waste movement (TGTG, n.d.-b). The main goal is to connect businesses that have surplus food that would go to waste and consumers who are willing to save this food, the so-called “waste warriors” (Condamine, 2020). At a global level, TGTG has become partners with 65.303 establishments and it has been able to get 29.5 million people contributing to 54.7 million saved meals until today (TGTG, n.d.-a).

The company arrived in Portugal in 2019 and it already convinced 490.005 people to sign up, 1.747 businesses to join the community and together they were able to save 303.621 meals until today (TGTG Portugal, n.d.). At the moment, the national growth is clear as well, having partnerships from North to South of the country, including the islands, and expanding every day. Also, it is very active in social media and it uses the different platforms to reach out to consumers and to educate them about food waste and how to reduce it.

4.3 Main pillars

The company fights food waste with the support of four main pillars: households, businesses, schools and public affairs (TGTG, n.d.-b).

Since household food waste accounts for more than half of the total amount in Europe, TGTG believes that some awareness and encouragement need to go in that direction (TGTG, n.d.-e). Therefore, the company gathers educational information and useful tips that families can use to reduce the food waste produced every day (Condamine, 2020) and it shares them on the website and across social media platforms through videos or enlightening posts, so that the knowledge is available to everyone.

Regarding businesses, TGTG works essentially with restaurants, bakeries, supermarkets and hotels (TGTG, n.d.-d). The leading objective is to help them creating profit from food that was going to be wasted without generating any revenue. However, the company also helps these businesses trying to understand the reason behind this surplus of food and creating plans to overcome the problem (TGTG, n.d.-d). Currently, the main focus is on the retail and consumption phase, but TGTG intends to go up the FSC and address food waste on other levels

(Condamine, 2020). Businesses can become TGTG's partners through spontaneous requests or if TGTG identifies them as establishments that would benefit from being part of the system (Condamine, 2020).

The third pillar is all about education and younger generations. Education is the key for change, so it is important to teach the next generation how to lead a more sustainable lifestyle and to find greater value on what the world has to give us (TGTG, n.d.-h). The company creates educational kits for young kids and for their teachers, as well as opportunities for university students to work closely with them through different projects (TGTG, n.d.-h).

Public affairs is related with policies and regulations (TGTG, n.d.-f). TGTG wants to make sure that the food waste issue is present in the political agenda of countries all around the world (TGTG, n.d.-f). One of the current initiatives concerns expiry dates on product labels, which is "responsible for 10% of the 88 million tons of food wasted across the value chain in Europe" (TGTG, n.d.-g). Thus, the company is petitioning in France to go from "Best before" to "Best before, not bad after" (Loritz, 2019), in order to avoid people disposing perfectly good food due to label illiteracy. TGTG is also working with the help of Carrefour and Unilever to make date labelling less confusing across Europe (Jamie Crummie, co-founder of TGTG cited by TechRound, 2020).

4.4 TGTG's app

Although TGTG has other projects, as mentioned before, its main activity is related with the app that allows businesses and consumers to come together. The app works in a very simple way, so that everyone can easily use it. Once customers download it, they need to create an account that gives them access to all the businesses available, highlighting the ones that are closer in terms of location. The meals' cost is always much lower than their original cost (Condamine, 2020), which is a great incentive for consumers. The payment is made through the app and a receipt is issued to be presented when picking up the order at the shop (Condamine, 2020) at the agreed schedule. Each establishment determines its own time interval, which usually corresponds to a time close to closing hours, indicating when the clients can go and get their request. Even though this is not always possible, TGTG encourages the use of reusable containers that customers themselves can bring from home (Condamine, 2020), in order to reduce single-use plastics, since 15.88 million tonnes of plastic packaging waste was generated inside Europe alone in 2015 (European Commission, 2018). However, the current pandemic situation has brought new rules for safety and hygiene.

Furthermore, TGTG created the “magic box” concept, which is their unique selling proposition (Jamie Crummie, co-founder of TGTG cited by TechRound, 2020). This means that, despite being able to predict which kind of products they will collect (ready to go meals, bread and bakery, groceries or other) and to discriminate their diet (no restrictions, vegetarian, vegan), customers are not able to see what is actually inside their magic box until the moment they arrive to collect it (Fleming, 2020). This adds the element of surprise and allows businesses more flexibility to sell whatever food surplus they had at the end of the service hours, without being committed to specific products, since it is difficult to predict with 100% accuracy what will be eaten during service time (Fleming, 2020). As one of the co-founders states: “if we knew what was going to be left over, we would hope that restaurants and retailers would not produce it” (Jamie Crummie, co-founder of TGTG cited by TechRound, 2020). It is even possible that sometimes the order is cancelled, because the establishment ended up having no surplus food on that day, but in that case the consumer is reimbursed (Condamine, 2020).

One additional feature of the app is the rating. After completing the purchase, consumers can make a review and let other people know how the experience with that establishment was. This is information that matters not only to other users, but to TGTG as well. The company works closely with the partner establishments from day one, by providing on boarding sessions, and the goal is to maintain direct communication, in order to maintain the quality (Condamine, 2020). Hence, when the rating of a certain partner is below-expectations, TGTG can act and help improving the experience for both sides (Condamine, 2020).

4.5 The business

“Too Good To Go has a unique opportunity to tackle a very serious environmental issue with a smart business model. Across the value chain and across borders, the issue of food waste is complex and hard to fix. By creating a new market for surplus food, we ensure more food gets eaten, making businesses and consumers winners in the process.” (Mette Lykke, CEO of TGTG cited by Loritz, 2019)

TGTG is a for-profit company and it generates revenue through its B2C platform by charging the business partners with either a yearly subscription fee or a small commission fee for each magic box that is sold (Condamine, 2020). However, TGTG has concerns that go beyond economic profit and that is confirmed by being considered a Certified B-Corporation since December 2019 (B Lab, n.d.). This means that TGTG’s business model comprises ethical standards while maximising profit, ensuring consistency between sustainability and its economic results (Gazzola et al., 2019). Mette Lykke, who is the current CEO, considers TGTG to be a “social impact” company, since all revenue created is the reflection of a good action

(Murray, 2020). The combination of “creating economic value in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges” is associated with the shared value concept and it might be the key for companies to bring business and society closer together (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

One further imperative aspect to mention about TGTG is its value creation, as it establishes a win-win-win situation between food-people-planet (TGTG, n.d.-c). On one side, there are the partner businesses that can earn an extra amount of money by selling food that would otherwise be wasted, as well as gain new clients and improve their relationship with existing ones by enhancing their CSR reputation. On the other side, there are the consumers who are able to buy food or meals ready-to-eat at really affordable prices. Finally, there is the environment that benefits from each magic box that is saved, since less food is being wasted.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging that TGTG also has partnerships with institutions and non-profit organisations, improving the social movement that the company is building. As an example, in Portugal, TGTG created a connection with Re-food and it allows consumers to make donations through the app, claiming that only by supporting each other can they get closer to their common goal.

5. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is the best option when the focus is on “understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have” (Merriam, 2009). Thus, this procedure seems to be the most suitable one, since the main goal of this research is to produce knowledge from human experience (Nowell et al., 2017), by uncovering perceptions and attitudes of TGTG’s customers towards its business and its CSR authenticity. This was accomplished by carrying out semi-structured in-depth interviews with clients of the app. Although TGTG focuses on both B2C and B2B, the spotlight of this study is on the final client, as the goal is to understand the perceptions of the individual consumer who purchases the magic box.

5.1 Sample

The sample for this study can be defined as a snowball sample, since it started with a small number of key individuals who then suggested other people to be part of the research (Merriam, 2009). All of them needed to match a specific criterion previously established, which was being a client of TGTG Portugal, in order to make sure that all participants were very well familiar with its concept and its service.

This snowball method resulted in a total of 20 interviews, which were conducted individually. At the end of each interview, demographic data was collected in order to better characterise the sample. Their ages ranged from 21 to 25 years old. Regarding gender, 14 were female and 6 were male. Most of them currently live in Lisbon, with 2 living in Porto and 2 other in smaller cities across the country. The highest educational level was either Bachelor’s Degree or Master’s Degree, except for one who had High School. Finally, the majority were students, but there were 2 working-students and 3 who were employed.

5.2 Instrument

The interviews conducted were semi-structured in-depth interviews. Although there was specific information that needed to be covered by all respondents, the interview had semi-structured questions and a list of topics, and all of them were flexibly used with no predetermined wording (Merriam, 2009). This structure stimulates discussion (Tracy, 2012) and it makes it possible to adapt to the situation, to the points of view of the participant and to new ideas about the topics being covered (Merriam, 2009), allowing a more fluid conversation.

All interviews started with a brief introduction, where the participants’ permission for being recorded was granted, followed by the main discussion and closed with a few words from the

interviewer and final comments from the respondent (*Appendix 1*). The topics included in each interview were food waste, attitudes towards TGTG, facilitators and barriers for using the app, and both perceptions about firms engaging in CSR and about CSR authenticity. These covered the following variables of interest: social cause involvement, brand attitude, consumer-company identification, purchase intentions, firm's motives, trust and cause-company fit.

5.3 Procedure

The initial participants were directly approached and invited to participate. Then, they were asked to refer other people that met the criterion. All participants were informed beforehand about the main goal of the interview, its estimated time and how it would be conducted.

The interviews were made through video calls, given the current pandemic situation. Each interviewee was asked to make sure they were in a calm environment with good internet connection and somewhere they would not be disturbed. In the end, participants were asked to fill in a small survey (*Appendix 2*) that provided demographic data. All interviews were voice recorded and the average time was 24 minutes and 52 seconds, with a maximum time of 48 minutes and 14 seconds and a minimum of 14 minutes and 8 seconds.

5.4 Data analysis

The method chosen to analyse the data collected was thematic analysis. The freedom of this approach results in a flexible and effective instrument, which is able to create a data narrative both valuable and complex (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has been described as a translator for the ones who speak the language of qualitative and quantitative analysis (Nowell et al., 2017), being a method that helps identifying, examining and presenting patterns that are buried in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is highly useful for summing up key insights of a considerable data set, since it requires a structured approach that culminates in one clean and organised message (Nowell et al., 2017).

Firstly, the voice recordings were all transcribed and read over. After being well familiarised with the data, the analysis was developed with the help of the software NVivo (version 12). It allows the data to be grouped into the different nodes, providing a better organisation to identify the previously mentioned patterns. Firstly, the main codes were created by focusing on the fundamental concepts present in the interviews and subsequent codes were generated from the input provided by participants. Based on these initial codes and patterns, themes were developed. The themes and sub-themes were reviewed and renamed several times until they were clearly defined and accurately reflected all consumers' ideas.

6. RESULTS

In the thematic content analysis of the interviews, five main themes were identified – the perceptions about food waste, the perceptions about CSR, the determinants of authenticity in CSR initiatives, the attitudes towards TGTG and finally TGTG authenticity. Details about the content analysis can be found in the *Appendix 3*.

6.1 Food waste

“There is so much food waste in developed countries (...), but they don’t think too much about the fact that maybe on the other side of the world people don’t have the same resources and the same access to food.” (P15)

Graph 2 – Results on food waste



To start with, it is important to understand how consumers feel about the social cause. The interviews suggest a high level of **awareness** about food waste among consumers. They look at this problem from two different perspectives: as a social (homeless people, underdeveloped countries) and as an environmental problem (planet’s resources, carbon emissions).

Moreover, they think that there are three obvious **reasons for this problem**. The first one is lack of population awareness and consumers think that “there is still a lot of education and awareness missing” (P2). Also, knowing that a huge part of this waste is generated in developed countries, consumers blame privilege for being a big trigger. Even people that are aware of the issue end up taking food for granted. The third reason is the fact that there is no easy solution, because there are a lot of factors involved.

On the bright side, consumers seem to agree that there is an increasing concern and number of people joining the **fight**. They see daily practices as the best way to contribute as an individual, such as freezing or creating new recipes with leftovers. However, they also mentioned innovative methods that can be adopted, more specifically, new apps that help take this cause a

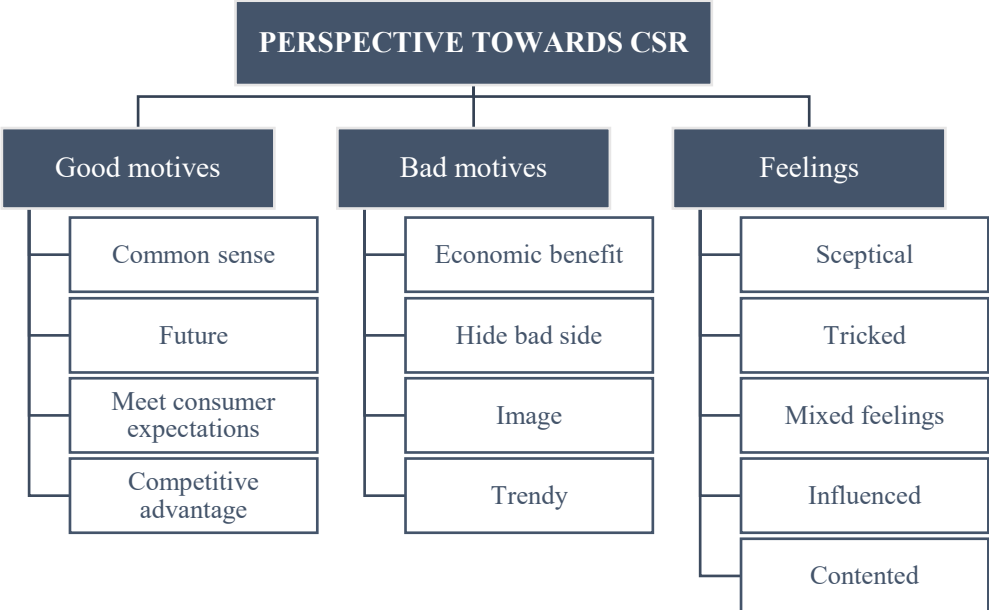
step further. In fact, when participants were asked whether or not they had already introduced some practices into their routine, many considered using TGTG a great tool for the daily fight against food waste. Even though they had all used the app and make some kind of effort, many recognise that there is still space for improvement and they are willing to work on that.

With a few exceptions, all participants showed a relevant level of **social cause involvement**, although some displayed a stronger connection than others. One of the participants even said that “food waste is one of the causes which I’m more actively against.” (P8). Thus, by discussing all the previous ideas, it was possible to distinguish between two types of consumers. First, the ones that are proactive in the cause involvement, that is, they firmly advocate the food waste fight and look for solutions themselves. Second, the ones that are reactive, that is, they show serious concern, but only when confronted with a certain situation.

6.2 Consumers’ perspective towards CSR

“I think that nowadays it’s almost required that companies have that part of social responsibility (...) it doesn’t even cross anyone’s mind not to have some kind of impact on society.” (P10)

Graph 3 – Results on perspective towards CSR



What goes on inside consumers’ minds when firms decide to engage in CSR is something that needs to be analysed in order to comprehend their perspective. When asked about their thoughts on CSR, interviewees focused on the firms’ motives behind these actions and their experienced feelings.

There are four main **good motives** that firms can display that will be positively regarded by consumers. The first one is common sense, meaning that companies are doing it because it is

the right thing to do and no firm should operate without taking CSR into consideration. The second one is future related, because consumers agree that society is heading towards a world where socially responsible behaviour prevails. So, if firms acknowledge and contribute for that future, then they are on a good path. Also, consumers know their expectations are constantly evolving and more sustainable and mindful alternatives are required from them. Thus, “it’s great that companies support the need of the consumer to be more and more conscious” (P8). Finally, consumers see CSR as a factor of distinction between firms. They claim they will choose the company that shows stronger efforts to become more socially responsible over the one that stays behind in these matters.

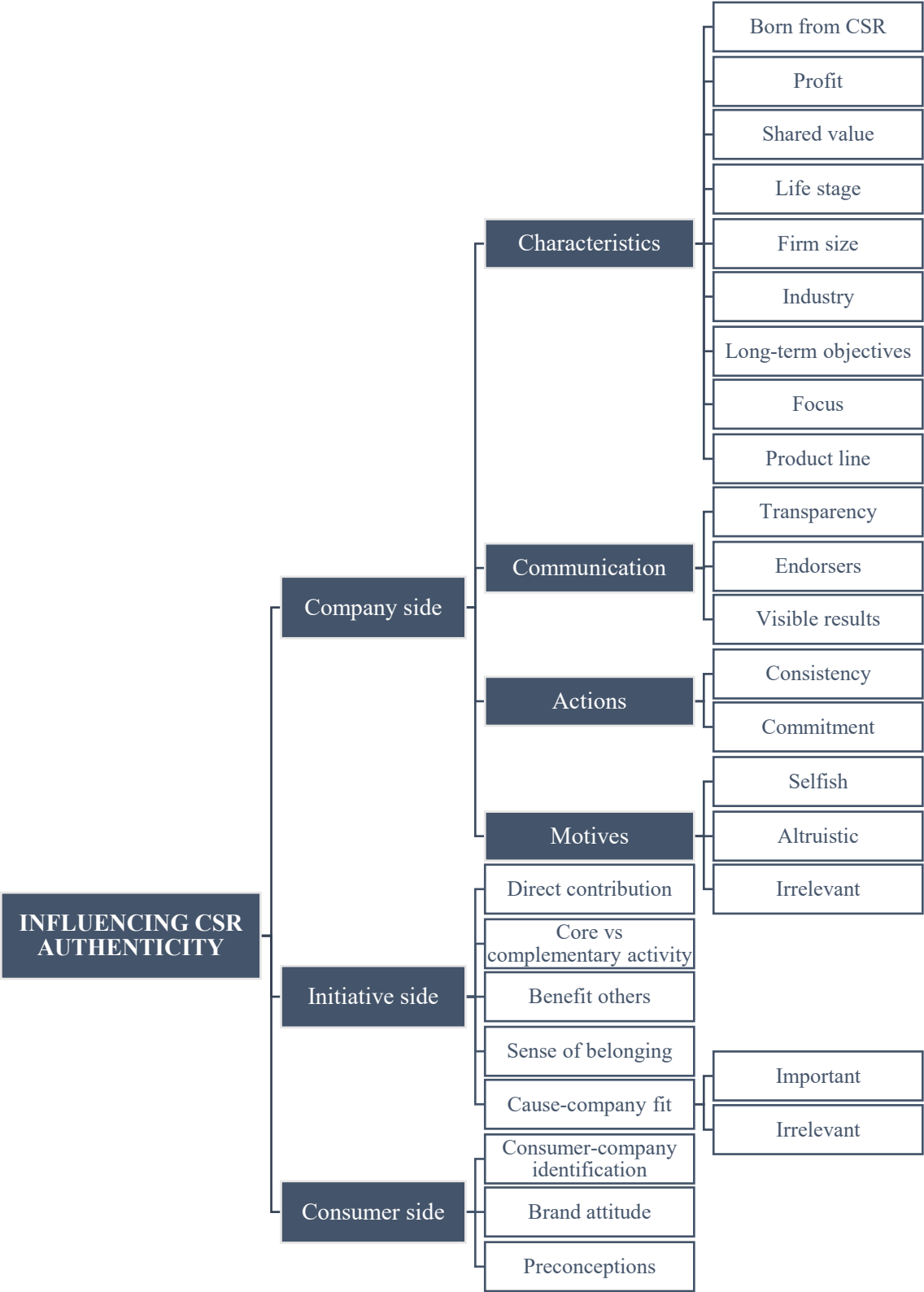
On the other hand, there are four main **bad motives** that, if people consider one of them to be the reason why the firm is socially responsible, then CSR will be negatively regarded by consumers. The most relevant one is economic benefit. Thinking that a certain company is only engaging in this type of initiatives for profit seeking reasons will ruin consumers’ perspective. This will also happen when consumers assume that a company is trying to hide the bad side of the business by emphasising its CSR endeavours, when in reality the negative actions have more impact than the good ones. The other two motives are mere concern for either the company’s image or for what is trending at the moment. Consumers do not appreciate it when “companies act with ulterior motives just because everybody else is doing it and it looks good” (P11).

Lastly, regarding consumers’ **feelings** about firms engaging in CSR, they find it hard to believe it is an honest decision, especially when certain companies are involved. Some consumers even feel tricked, because they see these actions as simple traps to deceive perceptions. There are also some mixed feelings from consumers who do not know what to think anymore or who see companies as acting both for themselves and for the sake of social responsibility at the same time. CSR is recognised by some as a way to positively influence an individual’s behaviour, in the sense that companies are capable of shaping consumers’ vision through what they choose to sell and to endorse as well. Besides all this, participants feel contented, either because they are naive about this topic or because they think that, despite what is behind CSR actions, what matters is that something good is being put forward.

6.3 Aspects influencing CSR authenticity

“I think most people have a special affection for a company that is created from scratch by people who had an idea for a noble cause. It might be one of the reasons to find it more authentic.” (P12)

Graph 4 – Results on aspects influencing CSR authenticity



With some knowledge about the consumers' perspective towards CSR, discovering what makes them perceive it as authentic is the next step. Throughout the interviews, participants dropped many hints on what they thought really influences CSR authenticity and these insights involved the company, the initiative and the consumers themselves.

On the **company side**, its characteristics, how it chooses to communicate with clients, its actions and its motives are all aspects that seem to have consequences on how consumers perceive authenticity. Starting with the firm's **characteristics**, being born from CSR was one of the most mentioned features being capable of shaping perceptions. Consumers think that companies that were created from scratch (e.g. Organicup, Mind The Trash, Dopper, etc.), always with socially responsible objectives in mind, conduct much more authentic CSR initiatives than the ones that create these goals along the way. One interviewee mentioned that "a company that eventually transforms itself, I get suspicious because I feel like they're moving with the tide" (P16), going back to following trends seen as a bad motive to engage in CSR. Profit might hinder authenticity too, since it is easier for consumers to consider a non-profit company as being genuinely concerned about society than a for-profit company. However, consumers mentioned some companies that make profit and can still achieve a perfect blend of economic and social benefits (e.g. Patagonia), which they find ideal.

In addition, people find a business that is still in the beginning of its life to be more authentic, because they believe that some of its initial ideals might be lost as time goes by. Its size was another aspect that seemed to be very important for consumers and the smaller the better, when it comes to authenticity perceptions. The industry where the company operates also has heavy repercussions, with the energy sector, the fashion industry, banks and fast food chains being some of the worst examples mentioned. Additionally, consumers' perceptions are shaped by long-term objectives displayed by firms.

Having one single focus inside the company positively affects CSR authenticity, as long as this focus does not go against social responsibility standards. Likewise, being dedicated only to one product/product line that is considered to be socially responsible causes a good reaction. Yet, having only this one satisfactory product/product line in the middle of a hundred bad ones will decrease authenticity and consumers will not find it as attractive, since buying that product means supporting a company that has other interests (e.g. Garnier launching solid shampoos).

In what regards **communication**, consumers expect full transparency from companies. Endorsers were also mentioned as a good strategy to make the message sound more truthful,

but most of all, consumers want visible results. If firms show that the CSR initiatives are generating good and relevant outcomes, then people are more likely to see them as authentic. Even more important than communication are the company's **actions**. Consistency was one of the characteristics that stood out the most as being key in authenticity perceptions. Spotting inconsistencies between the business and its CSR actions is enough for consumers to hold it in contempt, since people want to see that the whole organisation is working in a consistent way towards its goals and putting enough commitment into it. Returning to firms' **motives**, consumers find CSR initiatives with altruistic motives behind them to be more authentic than the ones with selfish motives. Still, they think the big majority of socially responsible actions lack selfless intentions. At the same time, one participant mentioned that "regardless of the motives, if they [companies] are doing something good for the world, why not?" (P10). So, even though they seem to pay a lot of attention to these motives, some consumers think that they end up being irrelevant and what matters is the action itself.

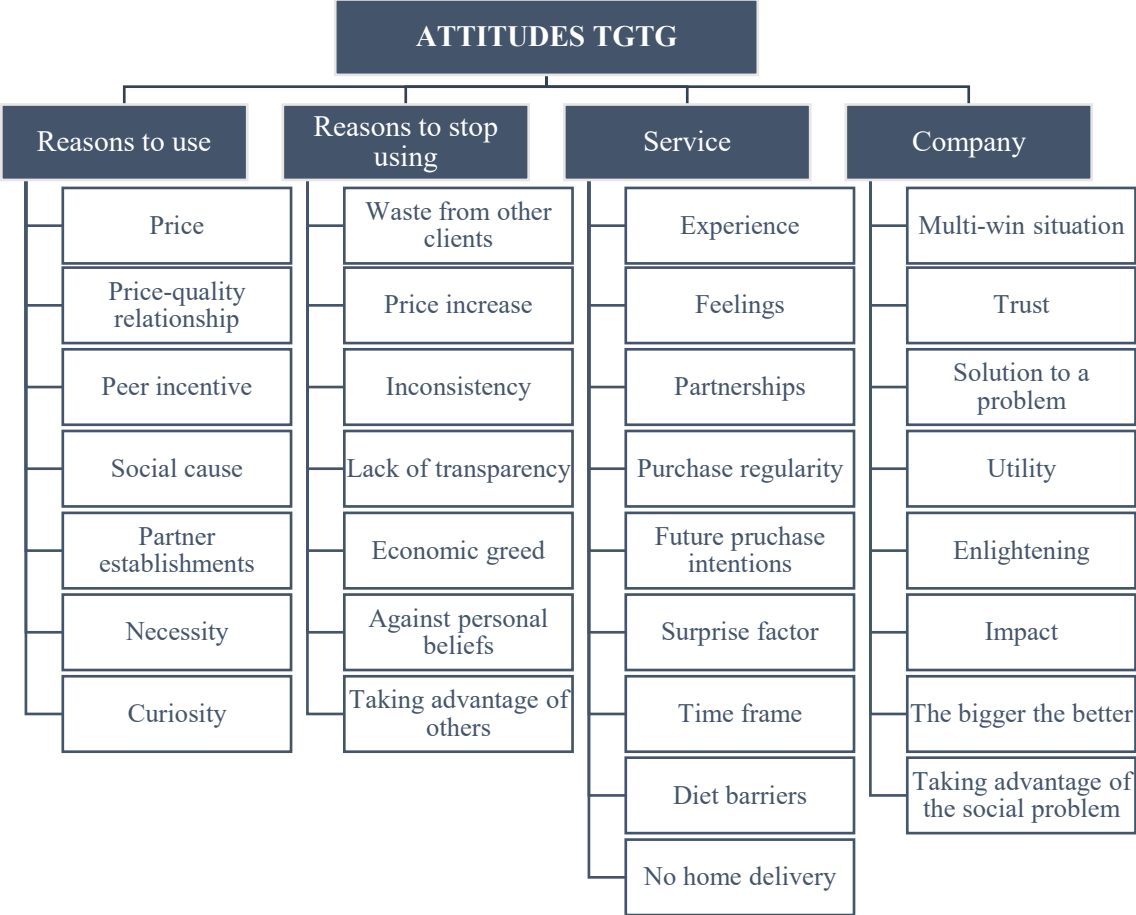
The **initiative** chosen and the way it is implemented also plays a decisive role in the evaluation of authenticity. Consumers value initiatives where they can make a direct contribution and see for themselves the impact that it has. Furthermore, when firms make the CSR initiative its core activity, it boosts authenticity when comparing to companies that will only have this social part as a complementary concern. Being perceived as benefiting others and not only themselves needs to be a central priority for firms, as well as making sure that they involve customers in the initiative, providing a sense of belonging. Finally, while for many cause-company fit is really important both from authenticity and strategic points of view, for a few others it seems to be irrelevant.

Regarding the **consumer side**, the level of identification with the company will influence how they classify its actions. If consumers identify themselves with the company, then they will consider its CSR as authentic. As they see an alignment between their own and the company's values, it means that the firm's actions would never go beyond certain boundaries. The same goes for brand attitude, since a good general evaluation of the company will positively influence the perceived authenticity, as consumers are influenced by their relationship with the brand. This also applies for a negative brand attitude, maybe even in a larger scale. Similarly, preconceptions about companies are difficult to overcome and they will weigh a lot on CSR authenticity perceptions.

6.4 Attitudes towards TGTG

“They have a business model that allows people to see that they’re really making a social contribution, so I trust them.” (P5)

Graph 5 – Results on attitudes towards TGTG



The interviews provided information on why consumers use the app, hypothetical reasons to stop using the app, what consumers think about the service and about the company too.

The participants talked about seven **reasons to use** TGTG. The most relevant one across interviews was the price, since this is one of the few chances they have to get a socially responsible service with no price premium. Actually, the app provides just the opposite and people find the price very attractive. This result might be explained by the fact that the sample of interviewees is mainly composed by students, a group that is usually very price sensitive. There is also a great price-quality relationship, which is another reason to use the service. Peer incentive and general recommendations were another frequent answer, suggesting that the business relies heavily on word-of-mouth. Obviously, the other significant reason is the social cause. For many, this is the main motivation to use TGTG, to be part of the chain that is fighting food waste. The partner establishments influence consumers as well, especially when they already liked them before using the app. TGTG might be used due to necessity, with its take

away options coming in handy when consumers need a meal that is ready-to-eat. Lastly, many consumers make their first purchase out of curiosity.

Consumers were asked what could possibly be a **reason to stop using** TGTG and they came up with seven different reasons once again. First, they would never buy a magic box again if they knew that they were being served with the waste of other clients. Again, the price is mentioned and they claim that a significant price increase would easily make them have second thoughts about using the app. Inconsistency in its business, lack of transparency and economic greed are three topics that re-emerged as further reasons to cut ties with the company. Additionally, if consumers were to find out that TGTG was somehow taking advantage of others, either their employees or their partners, then that would have bad consequences in their relationship with the firm. The same would go for acting against consumers' personal beliefs.

Now focusing on the **service**, consumers' overall experience is extremely positive, with a minority of occasional irregularities that did not stop consumers from wanting to keep using the app. The first time people buy a magic box might make them feel a little bit hesitant, since they have no idea about what and how much they are getting. However, all the other times are usually associated with good feelings and the sensation of "almost as a heroic act" (P3). While there are consumers who think the partnerships are satisfactory, others highly recommend an expansion, but this discrepancy might be explained by the area where each consumer lives, since big cities' centres have more options than the rest of the country.

About purchase regularity, many participants consider themselves regular customers already (once per week), but the majority has not used the app enough times to do so. Nevertheless, consumers seem to be determined to either maintain the purchase habit or to improve it in the future, except the few that find the surprise factor, the time frames available or some diet restrictions to be a barrier. Anyhow, there are people who look at the surprise factor as something that arouses curiosity in a good sense and people who "feel like at any time of the day I have the opportunity to go get food and give it a new life" (P16). Something that was mentioned several times was the fact that TGTG has no delivery option, which is something that recently people got used to, with the expansion of food delivery apps (e.g. Uber Eats, Glovo). Consumers think that it would drastically improve the number of times using the app.

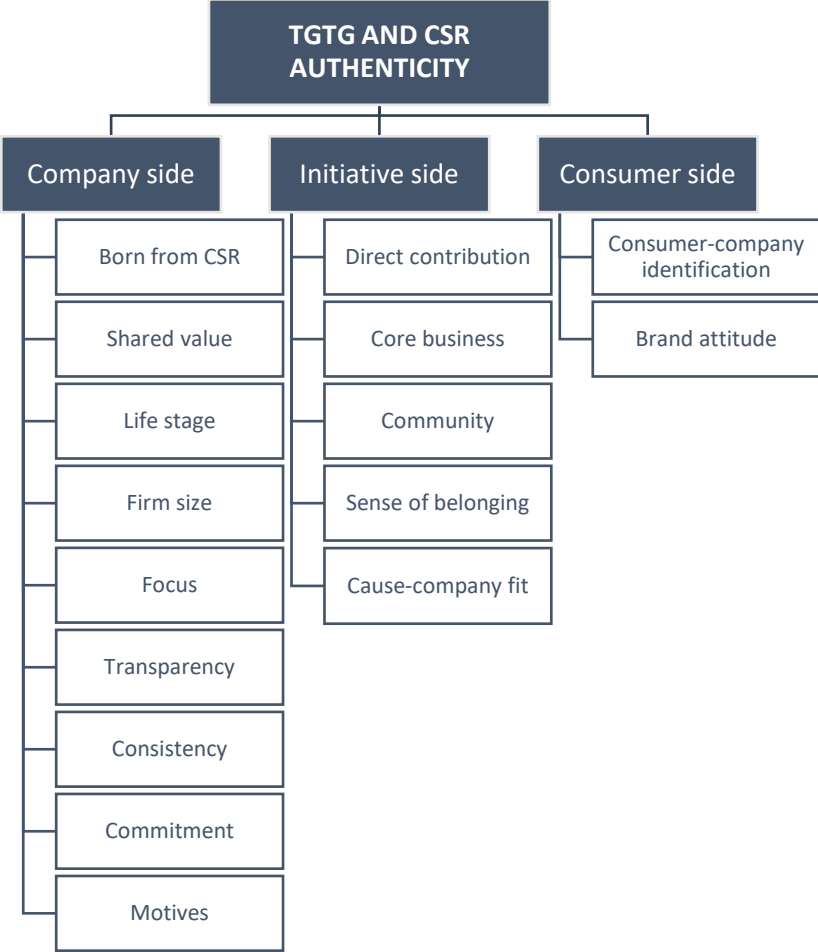
Finally, the **company** creates a multi-win situation, where consumers, partners, the business itself and even the environment benefit. There is a general sense of trust among consumers and they see the company as a solution to a big problem that society faces on a daily basis.

Consumers see utility in the app and perceive it as a viable way to fight food waste, also because it is an enlightening idea and it helps raising awareness to the problem. Some consumers argue that it was TGTG that opened up their eyes to this issue and that alone is already a big contribution. Thus, people think that the company has impact, because it is slowly changing the mindsets of the population, but not at a big scale due to its still small size. While many companies suffer bad consequences in their expansion, especially when it comes to the ones that work with mass production, in the case of TGTG the bigger the better, representing more benefits to all involved. Still, being seen as taking advantage of the social problem is a risk for the company. The truth is that some look at the situation that way, which is bad for the firm, but most trust that “they tried to find a solution for a problem that they believed in rather than tried to take advantage of that for personal benefit” (P18).

6.5 TGTG and CSR authenticity perceptions

“The feeling that Too Good To Go provides is that they’re doing that for you and the planet (...), the sensation of being part of something.” (P3)

Graph 6 – Results on TGTG and CSR authenticity



Last but not least, a combination between the factors mentioned by consumers when discussing CSR authenticity and how these factors resurfaced when talking about TGTG. This last topic is what essentially displays whether or not consumers consider TGTG's CSR initiative to be authentic. Again, it is possible to divide the insights into company side, initiative side and consumer side.

Starting off with the **company side**, TGTG is actually born from CSR and its whole existence is based on sustainable ideals, which is a great authenticity booster. Consumers recognise its shared value strategy, saying that the company is the perfect example of a balanced relationship between “being able to help society and at the same time make profit” (P2). Moreover, although it saved its first meal back in 2016, the app only arrived in Portugal in October of 2019, so the company is considered to be in the initial stage of its life. It is also seen as a rather small company still, transmitting a sense of familiarity. Its one and only focus is fighting food waste and consumers are well aware of that, which positively affects authenticity. People feel like TGTG is a transparent, consistent and committed company, since they seem to be honest about their work, dedicated to the cause and to always act in accordance with their values. Regarding motives, the general conclusion is that consumers like to think the firm does not “do this purely for economic benefits” (P4) and that it is determined to educate people about this problem. But there are still the ones who find it hard to believe that it is all about the message and help solving social problems.

Secondly, when discussing the **initiative side** of TGTG, consumers even covered all the topics previously mentioned in the section about CSR authenticity. The initiative allows a direct contribution, so consumers see for themselves the results of their input. Furthermore, the core business is the actual initiative, creating a strong cohesion in everything the company does. TGTG is instantly associated with helping the community, since it is considered to be supporting local businesses in two distinct ways. Firstly, the partner establishments are able to earn some extra money with the food that they would not sell otherwise. Secondly, the platform gives them improved visibility, almost as a type of publicity, and the chance to connect with customers in an innovative way. Also, there is a sense of belonging, consumers feel like they are part of something bigger when using TGTG and they know that their actions are really making a difference. Cause-company fit is unquestionable, as without the cause there would be no business.

On the **consumer side**, there was no participant saying that they did not identify with the company at any level. Even though some did not show much conviction about it, others stated that this is exactly the type of firm they can say they identify themselves with to a great extent. Consumers validate this relation through compatibility of values, consciousness and life philosophy, or even by admitting that they already applied for a job in the company. As a final note, the brand is perceived as a reference for other brands, people look up to it and they have a “really good impression about them” (P1).

7. CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this dissertation is to understand consumers' perceptions towards CSR and what influences their perceptions of CSR authenticity using a case study about a firm that has a social cause as its core business. Considering the literature review, the case study and the results obtained from the interviews, it is possible to draw some conclusions and gather some recommendations both for companies in general and more specifically for TGTG.

7.1 Main findings and recommendations

First of all, after discussing the topic of food waste, it was possible to understand that TGTG's consumers are mindful of this problem and they recognise its consequences at distinct levels. However, they emphasise that the problem lies within the population in general. Since this is a topic that only recently gained some visibility, it is important to keep spreading the word and to continuously engage society. The company could take what is being done about date labels and extend this to other areas, such as including in the packaging which resources were used to produce that product. On the household level, consumers suggested being more conscious about cooking quantities, buying only what is really necessary in the supermarket, freezing leftovers, creating new recipes with the ingredients that people have at home, making sure that food is actually bad before throwing it away because the date label has expired, among others.

The duality regarding CSR that is present in previous literature (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015) is also evident in this study. Consumers think that engaging in CSR activities is something that can only bring benefits to all the parties involved. Also, companies that do not include the social sphere into their business will certainly fall behind. Nonetheless that does not make them look at a CSR initiative as something that is always developed for a good reason. A firm's socially responsible long-term objectives might mitigate these ideas, if consumers notice a clear effort. Thus, companies need to show dedication and strong evidence that, in the long-term, the whole company will be following socially responsible practices. Taking an example that was provided during the interviews, an oil company revealing that it plans to only deal with renewable energies in the future might be something that helps consumers to consider its actions from a positive perspective.

Considering what we know from the literature that determines CSR authenticity, it is possible to conclude that consumers covered all aspects while discussing the topic. However, not all have the same importance and some extra factors were highlighted by participants. For-profit companies, for instance, might have some trouble trying to convince consumers that they have

a bigger goal than to make money. Big corporations go through the same problem, since people are increasingly questioning their motives and find them far less trustworthy than small companies. Also, the industry where the company operates matters and it might either help or hurt perceptions of CSR authenticity. Although these are aspects that companies are not able to change, the concept of shared value can help moderating this effect, since being able to fuse economical and societal benefit together weakens the exclusive profit seeking perception. Both the size of the firm and its life stage were topics that seemed to have more importance than expected. However, while consumers think that smaller and more recent firms pursue more authentic CSR initiatives, they still look at bigger and well-established firms as being capable of developing more successful ones. Their secure and grown business already has powerful tools and the ability to reach out to a bigger audience, causing a greater impact. Thus, small and big ones win when it comes to credibility and efficiency, respectively.

The results also show that people find meaning in being involved in the initiatives developed by firms and in being able to see that they are making a direct contribution. Companies should invest in CSR initiatives and campaigns that allow consumers to feel like they are included and that show results of their participation. Furthermore, consumers are increasingly using CSR as a distinctive feature of businesses, so, given two similar options of a product or service, they are progressively going for the most sustainable choice. Therefore, CSR is considered a competitive advantage as extant literature suggests (Marín et al., 2016) and a reason for some firms to be better regarded than others.

On another note, there is a clear difference between discussing the authenticity of firms that introduced CSR along the way or that have CSR as a complementary section of the business and discussing the authenticity of firms that have it in plain sight, at the heart of business. In fact, according to consumers, being born from a socially responsible purpose is one of the most important indications of authentic behaviour, as well as being consistent in every action taken. This gives them confidence towards the business, since they know that CSR is something that the firm cannot live without and not just some supplement for the company to increase its profits.

TGTG has some of these aspects in its favour, such as having a shared value based business or including the consumer in its CSR actions, but are they enough to consider the company to be blessed? There is a tricky equilibrium that TGTG needs to achieve, which is to grow up until the point where people see a significant impact caused by the company, but not enough to be

considered one of those big corporations that have a hard time being perceived as trustworthy. Consumers believe that TGTG is helping the fight against food waste. Right now, the number of meals saved through the app across the world is increasing every day, as well as the number of waste warriors. However, consumers do not see an influence powerful enough to say that the company is making a big difference in the community yet. At the same time, by growing too much, the company runs the risk of being scrutinised like a big corporation. Thus, TGTG needs to expand the business while preserving its initial values and making sure that the company's growth is reflected in society.

One element in TGTG's business that is really appealing to consumers is the low price of the magic boxes. TGTG should keep their price strategy, because an increase might lead to the loss of a big part of current customers. On the other hand, what could boost the number of clients is expanding the partner establishments across the country. TGTG should try to focus on places that are frequented by the target consumer, since having a previous connection with the establishment is one of the reasons for consumers to use the app.

On a more negative side, TGTG could be seen as taking advantage of the social problem, although the majority of consumers does not see it that way. Participants justified this by saying that companies that were born from CSR can fight this possibility by showing consumers that first came the willingness to find a solution for a problem and only then came the intention to profit from that solution. Even though the whole purpose is the fight against food waste, the fact that it is a for-profit company might lead some consumers to still think that they are all about making money. However, "not all profit is equal" and profit related to social purposes allows companies to grow while benefitting society (Porter & Kramer, 2011) and that is the message that needs to touch consumers. TGTG should keep creating strong relationships with non-profit organisations, show other internal initiatives that give back to society and invest profit in good causes, generating a closer tie with the community.

Overall, consumers see authenticity in TGTG's CSR actions. The factors that contribute for that the most are that it is a company that was created with CSR in mind and there is no way to separate the economic success of the business from the social benefits that it provides, as the core business is the CSR action itself. Also, it is still small and rather recent, so it is considered to be doing everything in its power to grow and share its values with the community. TGTG has one single focus, which shows total commitment, and it developed an initiative where

consumers can see the outcomes of their actions straight away. Finally, the company's values are very relatable, so consumers can see a part of themselves engraved in the brand.

With the discussion about CSR, it is possible to say that there are more sceptics than believers regarding companies in general. Even though many recent businesses already have present what needs to be done in order to create a superior relationship with consumers, well-established companies that are susceptible to entrenched negative judgements from consumers have big transformations ahead and must reorder their long-term priorities. TGTG is a company that seems to have what it takes to be perceived as conducting authentic CSR and it is still a victim of scepticism from consumers who can no longer trust what companies promise. This shows that some companies are going in the right direction, but that is not enough, as the task of switching consumers' authenticity perceptions is a hard one. The corporate world needs to redirect the way business is conducted if they want to win consumers' trust and be seen as developing authentic CSR initiatives.

7.2 Limitations and future research

This study contributes with evidence on consumers' perceptions and it provides relevant insights regarding companies like TGTG that have CSR integrated in their business. Nonetheless there are some limitations that need to be taken into account when interpreting the results presented.

The first limitation concerns the type of sample used for the individual interviews. One problem with the snowball sample is that "participants tend to suggest others who are similar to themselves" (Tracy, 2012). This resulted in a group of individuals with a very restricted age interval, similar backgrounds and poor gender equilibrium, having mostly female participants. Also, they were either students or had just started their professional career. The results obtained might have been influenced by these aspects, since participants are likely to have identical points of view, given their similar context. Likewise, this might have excluded some valuable ideas from the study that could have contributed for a more accurate representation of consumers' perceptions. Therefore, future studies would benefit from a more representative sample, involving people with diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Also, research could include individuals who are not TGTG's clients, so that a comparison between clients and non-clients could be developed. This would help understanding the weight that the relationship with the brand has on perceptions of CSR authenticity.

The second limitation has to do with the conditions under which the interviews took place due to the current pandemic situation. Interviews had to be conducted through web video calls, which makes it more difficult to have the same kind of interactivity and genuine communication that a normal face-to-face interview would provide (Saunders et al., 2009). Hence, it becomes more challenging to create rapport with the participants, which can interfere with the experience as a whole. Still, this qualitative data collected could work as a base for conducting a quantitative study. This would provide more resonant results about how the variables relate to each other and about which factors have a stronger significance in what concerns CSR authenticity.

The topic of discussion can also be a limitation, due to the fact that people like to be regarded as individuals who are concerned for the environment and for others. Therefore, opinions regarding CSR and the ethical company that was being addressed might have been exaggerated, in order to portray the idea that participants are acting and thinking according to what is believed to be morally respectable. This is associated with the social desirability bias and its effect can be mitigated through indirect questioning, which is a projective technique where respondents answer to structured questions adopting the perspective of others (Fisher, 1993).

The fact that the study was focused exclusively on the B2C side of the company poses an additional limitation. Although the individual consumer is the one buying the magic box, the partner establishments are also able to provide valuable insights. These business work closely with TGTG and might even have a deeper knowledge on how the company operates and about its culture. Thus, this study could be strengthened in the future by incorporating the business customers' perspective in what concerns perceptions towards the authenticity of CSR actions and the concept of shared value that TGTG embraces.

Regarding future research, the fight against food waste could benefit from understanding the main necessities of consumers, so that they can effectively reduce food waste. Despite already having some clear ideas that can be introduced in everyone's daily routines, consumers might need some extra incentives. People are still inattentive about this issue and what might make them more active towards the social cause is not straightforward, so a study that could address what would make the population more eager to fight could be extremely valuable. As previously mentioned, information that is present on products' labels might be very helpful in some cases, for example.

Additionally, as the size of the company revealed itself as an important factor for consumers' perceptions on authenticity, it would be interesting to study this effect in more detail. Consumers associate the capacity of a firm to be authentic with whether it is a smaller and more approachable business or a big corporation, as well as depending on the culture ingrained in the company. These characteristics affect perceptions of other dimensions of attitudes towards companies as well, such as credibility and performance. The examination of this relationship could be achieved through an experimental study and it could cover different types of businesses established in different industries.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Semi-structured interview script

Welcome! In the first place I would like to know if I have your permission to record this interview in order to make a more detailed analysis in the future.

I want to thank you for agreeing with participating in this interview and for contributing for my Master's Dissertation. My main goal with this interview is essentially to understand your perceptions as a consumer of TGTG.

All this information will be collected anonymously and it will be used only for academic purposes, so I ask you to be honest during the interview and to share all your opinions and perspectives, developing your answers as much as you can.

Food Waste

- What is your opinion regarding food waste in our current society?
 - Social cause involvement
 - Daily practices

Attitudes TGTG

- How familiarised are you with TGTG?
 - Other initiatives
- What is your opinion about the company?
 - Attitudes
 - Experience as a consumer
 - Utility for the community
 - Feelings when buying a magic box
 - Identification with the company

Facilitators and barriers

- What are the reasons for you to use TGTG?
 - First purchase
 - Recommendation vs own initiative
 - Regularity
 - Future purchase intention
- What would make you stop using TGTG?

CSR

- What is your opinion about firms engaging in this kind of social responsibility initiatives?
- Please give me an example of a company that you consider authentic in its CSR actions and one that you do not consider authentic. Why?
 - Firm's practices
 - Reasons for considering it authentic/inauthentic
- What do you think about TGTG's CSR actions?
 - Authenticity
 - Trust

- Keeps promises
- Transparency
- Core activity
- Taking advantage of the situation
- Imagine that a certain company decides to develop an initiative with the same goal of TGTG, that is, food waste. Please give me an example of one company that you would trust the initiative and one that you would not trust. Why?
 - Cause-company fit

Before ending the interview, do you have any question you would like to make or any comment you would like to add?

In case you are interested in the results of this research or if you have any doubts in the future, I will give you my contact.

We have reached the end of the interview. Thank you once again for your time and your contribution.

Appendix 2 - Demographics survey

Dear participant,

The following survey was developed to collect some demographic information about the interviewees and it takes less than 1 minute to complete.

Thank you for your help!

1. Please select your gender.
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
2. Please write your age.
3. Please write the name of the city where you live.
4. Please select your highest level of education.
 - High school or lower
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - PhD or higher
5. Please select your current occupation.
 - Student
 - Working-student
 - Employed
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed
 - Retired
 - Other

Appendix 3 – Category dictionary

Food waste

Awareness	
Social problem	<p>“This is a real problem, because there are homeless people and a lot others with difficulties in getting food.” (P14)</p> <p>“There is so much food waste in developed countries (...), but they don’t think too much about the fact that maybe on the other side of the world people don’t have the same resources and the same access to food.” (P15)</p>
Environmental problem	<p>“This has implications at the environmental level.” (P2)</p> <p>“When I’m wasting food I feel like I’m also wasting other people’s work and resources of the planet.” (P8)</p> <p>“Taking the statistics into account, it’s one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions. Taking into account the problem of climate change, it’s a good topic to approach in order to try to diminish carbon emissions.” (P18)</p>

Reasons	
Lack of population awareness	<p>“A lot of people have no conscience at all about this topic. There are a lot of people that simply don’t know that such a big quantity of food is wasted.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think it is still a rather recent topic when comparing to other ecological movements. (...), so I think there is still a lot of education and awareness missing. So, I think it still isn’t something that people pay much attention to in their daily lives.” (P3)</p> <p>“It’s a thing that a lot of us don’t realise nowadays and that happens in a huge scale and that maybe doesn’t have that much visibility.” (P11)</p>
Food taken for granted	<p>“Since we know we have it, we take food for granted and it’s really easy to miss expiration dates or to not feel like eating and throwing it away.” (P5)</p> <p>“Here in Europe we don’t realise the shortages that those people [population from developing countries] go through, because we already take it [food] for granted. There’s so much food waste in developed countries because people clearly are used to this reality that they live in.” (P15)</p>
No easy solution	<p>“If we think about it, we do have a huge problem here, but it’s not easy to solve it either.” (P2)</p> <p>“I know there’s a lot, but I also don’t know how to solve it 100%.” (P10)</p>

Fight	
Daily practices	<p>“(…) have a better conception about cooking portions.” (P10)</p> <p>“Everything that isn’t eaten at the time we store it or freeze it. But that’s a family habit that I have and that has been with me since ever.” (P11)</p> <p>“Sometimes I pay close attention to that section in the supermarket where they have the products that are close to the expiration date and I have no problem in purchasing them.” (P12)</p> <p>“I think we should try to maximise what we have at home, try to create other recipes or, in case things are close to their expiration date, try to start by eating those items. If we have surplus of food, always freeze it. When we go to the supermarket try not to buy big quantities and go for smaller quantities and more supermarket trips if necessary.” (P20)</p>
Innovative methods	<p>“Regarding apps like Too Good To Go that cooperate with establishments, I already use them on a regular basis in order to prevent food from going to the trash or meals from being wasted.” (P3)</p> <p>“I found an app that I’m trying to implement inside my house, which gives us a vision of what we have in our refrigerator or pantry and then gives us suggestions of meals.” (P18)</p>
Space for improvement	<p>“I would like to be more careful about that, honestly.” (P4)</p> <p>“Honestly, I feel like I can work a lot more on that.” (P10)</p> <p>“I think it’s something that I want to improve in my life and I still have a long way to go.” (P11)</p>

Social cause involvement	
Proactive	<p>“Food waste is one of the causes which I’m more actively against.” (P8)</p> <p>“It was me who told my parents to use it, because they were a little bit hesitant.” (P18)</p>
Reactive	<p>“I got to know about Too Good To Go through friends.” (P6)</p> <p>“I’m not proactive when it comes to these environmental issues. However, if I start noticing them or if they get more visibility, even if it’s through influencers, I think that it starts getting into my head and I start to think more about them, so I can keep improving my attitudes.” (P11)</p> <p>“People started talking more about Too Good To Go, so I wanted to try.” (P20)</p>

Consumers' perspective towards CSR

Good motives	
Common sense	<p>“That [worrying about social responsibility] shouldn't be something good, it should be what is correct. It should be the baseline, to have social responsibility in a company. There should be no companies without social responsibility.” (P2)</p> <p>“It [CSR] should almost be like common sense and mandatory.” (P7)</p> <p>“I think that nowadays it's almost required that companies have that part of social responsibility, I think that it doesn't even cross anyone's mind not to have some kind of impact on society.” (P10)</p>
Future	<p>“I think this [CSR] is the future. I think that, if people really had a little bit more of this social responsibility, then it would be possible to create really interesting projects.” (P1)</p> <p>“I have an interest for the present times and I consider myself a person who is interested in the world, and I see that the next step and all the economic and social measures being implemented (...) are heading towards sustainability, green energies, social responsibility. So, I feel like the future is all about that.” (P16)</p>
Meet consumer expectations	<p>“Since we are getting more and more demanding, we'll want more and more options (...), so I think it [engaging in CSR initiatives] makes perfect sense and it's an advantage both for us and for them [companies].” (P7)</p> <p>“I think it's great that companies support the need of the consumer to be more and more conscious.” (P8)</p> <p>“People are increasingly looking for that [CSR]. (...) I think that companies should take into consideration this demand for conscious shopping, because that's only benefiting them and, by not implementing it, they will only hurt themselves.” (P14)</p> <p>“I think that people care more and more about it [CSR], so companies will only benefit from paying attention to that part. Even if it still isn't obvious, a lot of people buy things while thinking about what happens behind the brand.” (P20)</p>
Competitive advantage	<p>“I think this [CSR] is already becoming a competitive factor among companies (...), if one company does that and the other doesn't, if you already have that consciousness, you prefer the company that is conscious regarding waste and maximisation of resources.” (P5)</p> <p>“Companies that contribute, not only have the merit to consider themselves better than the others (...)” (P15)</p> <p>“If BP doesn't do that [effort to leave petroleum energy behind] and Galp does, then the probability of going to a Galp gas station to fill up my tank is higher.” (P16)</p>

Bad motives	
Economic benefit	<p>“(…) they [companies] are just finding another way to make money (…). I wouldn’t think “oh they are really doing this thinking about the planet”.” (P8)</p> <p>“I don’t know up to which level certain companies only do this in order to have deduction of taxes or to trick the client and then the actual outcome is not that good.” (P10)</p>
Hide bad side	<p>“About Garnier now having solid shampoos. I’ve heard a lot of people saying that this situation is the company trying to hide the fact that they’re one of the most polluting companies in the world, the fact that they don’t improve working conditions (…). All these questions, I don’t know up to which point this is just to make people forget all about the bad they do.” (P10)</p> <p>“I think there are some projects with that social side that some companies try to include, but then you investigate a little bit and it looks like it’s all words and not the real image of the company.” (P13)</p> <p>“It’s not good to use the good attributes of the company to persuade people into buying, when maybe the bad things that it does have a lot more impact than the good ones.” (P15)</p>
Image	<p>“I think that is more for the image and not to be criticised (…)” (P13)</p> <p>“I would say that many of those things [CSR initiatives] are just for us to have a good image of the company.” (P17)</p>
Trendy	<p>“(…) if they care about it [CSR] is just because everyone else is doing it, so they follow, but I’m not sure if they’re actually concerned about it.” (P8)</p> <p>“(…) sometimes I think it’s just something that is trendy and people value, so companies act with ulterior motives just because everybody else is doing it and it looks good.” (P11)</p> <p>“It’s something that is trendy and I think it’s a little bit fake for all companies to go along with that trend when they don’t even have 1% of social responsibility.” (P13)</p>

Feelings	
Sceptical	<p>“I think they [companies] have the social duty, but I don’t think that all of them have the right ideals to go through with it.” (P10)</p> <p>“I’m always a little bit suspicious about that [motives]. I think that they wouldn’t do it if they didn’t have some kind of personal benefit. (...) I think that their main concern isn’t to please the audience at the expense of making profits.” (P12)</p> <p>“Then companies like L’Oreal, Nike or Adidas, they have some social initiatives, but I don’t know if I believe them 100%. But maybe I’m too sceptic when it comes to these things.” (P13)</p> <p>“Apple said they stopped giving chargers because of sustainability issues. (...) But at the same time, I think that Apple, being the biggest example of a capitalist company, doesn’t have the best motives behind that situation, since the price of the iPhone remains the same.” (P16)</p>
Tricked	<p>“For example, Zara and Pull and Bear that have that “Join life” label, which is related to the cotton used, but in reality is just a minimum component. This is just to trick the perception of the consumer.” (P4)</p> <p>“For example, companies like McDonald’s or Coca-Cola changing colours to green to look more environmentally friendly, that makes me feel a little bit tricked and I start to doubt the identity of those companies. Because for me they don’t have that image and that’s ok. Companies like these that try to have a certain image even if they don’t have the purpose in their heart, they make me feel like everything’s a lie.” (P13)</p> <p>“What we know about companies sometimes isn’t reality.” (P18)</p>
Mixed feelings	<p>“Sometimes I have some mixed feelings.” (P11)</p> <p>“I think it’s a little bit of both [good motives and personal benefit].” (P18)</p>
Influenced	<p>“Our behaviour also depends a lot on what companies bring out, that is, the offer and how they promote it. I think it [CSR] has a big impact, because we almost end up listening more to the companies that we buy from (...) and we end up assimilating more information from there than from school or some other place. We end up looking at companies like they’re our guides or they end up representing the way we see things.” (P3)</p> <p>“It [CSR] is a way to educate people that there’s an alternative. It’s also a way to encourage people to help each other.” (P12)</p>
Contented	<p>“Everything that is related with sustainability and social responsibility I’m really naive. (...) when people propose this kind of initiatives, I always think that it’s a good thing.” (P1)</p> <p>“I think that it’s better to have these actions than none at all, even if they’re a little bit selfish.” (P11)</p> <p>“Wanting or not, there’s always the positive part, which is the reuse of resources. That alone it’s already a positive aspect.” (P15)</p>

Aspects influencing CSR authenticity: Company side

Characteristics	
Born from CSR	<p>“For me, I think I believe more in the companies that I know that their objective started from the beginning to be a sustainable objective.” (P11)</p> <p>“I think most people have a special affection for a company that is created from scratch by people who had an idea for a noble cause. It might be one of the reasons to find it more authentic.” (P12)</p> <p>“(…) a company that eventually transforms itself, I get suspicious because I feel like they’re moving with the tide.” (P16)</p> <p>“At the authenticity level, maybe I’d say Organicup, those brands that sell bamboo toothbrushes and companies like that, because they’re companies that grew from that objective of decreasing waste and minimising plastic.” (P20)</p>
Profit	<p>“If it was a non-profit company I’d say “ok they’re doing this for the well-being of the society and the environment.” (P17)</p>
Shared value	<p>“Its [Patagonia’s] objective is to fight environmental problems and get people to enjoy what the world and the company have to give at the same time. I think that the purpose of the company being interconnected with the environmental or social impact that they have is what makes it easy not to create a big discrepancy between both parts [social and economic sides].” (P14)</p>
Life stage	<p>“In the beginning, when you start something, you have certain ideals. But then, when you progress, things change.” (P9)</p> <p>“One that I find authentic probably Mind The Trash (…) because I think Mind The Trash is still in the beginning.” (P18)</p>
Firm size	<p>“I’m all for multinational companies, but I think that, nowadays, our generation has started questioning big companies and all that they do that we don’t have any knowledge about.” (P10)</p> <p>“I don’t think it’s for personal benefit, because they [McDonald’s] are already a big company, so they don’t need to trick people with ideas. (…) They [McDonald’s and Coca-Cola] are companies that are on top and don’t need to fool people with ideas to keep growing.” (P12)</p> <p>“For big companies it’s really hard to combine both things [social and economic sides] and sometimes they end up shooting themselves in the foot by trying to have that type of initiatives.” (P14)</p> <p>“In general, I’d say that I’d trust more in small and medium companies rather than in big corporations.” (P16)</p>
Industry	<p>“Maybe if it was a bank I wouldn’t accept it [CSR initiative] or believe in it because of the money that they receive.” (P6)</p> <p>“I think that everything associated with energy, fuels, petroleum and others, [has a bad CSR reputation] since there’s no way that the process is sustainable.” (P10)</p> <p>“I don’t know if Zara has that kind of initiatives (...), but even if it did and I knew about them, I’d say right away that I think they’re all lies, since the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries and Zara is one of the biggest stores in the world.” (P14)</p> <p>“Any fast food chain. I wouldn’t trust it.” (P19)</p>

Long-term objectives	“(…) their [Galp] biggest percentage of profit comes from petroleum energy, but we can feel the effort to try and leave that behind in the long-term.” (P16)
Focus	<p>“Those companies I think I’d believe more, because they focus on one single thing and try to do their best.” (P13)</p> <p>“Patagonia is a role model company in this kind of social responsibility actions, because the whole company revolves around social responsibility.” (P14)</p> <p>“(…) any company where you can see that the whole concept of the project is based on sustainability [is authentic].” (P15)</p>
Product line	<p>“Companies like the one from those Dopper bottles. Those companies that only have one product [are authentic].” (P13)</p> <p>“I’d rather support companies that have an ecological base of 100% than those that only focus on one ecological product or product line in many.” (P18)</p>

Communication	
Transparency	<p>“[I’d stop buying from the company] if something was uncovered and it showed that they aren’t that transparent in the message that they’re transmitting.” (P10)</p> <p>“They [Zara] may have t-shirts saying that 50% of their cotton is recyclable, but you don’t see anything else about that.” (P14)</p> <p>“They [Sony] are transparent about where their pieces come from and about what they do, so it ends up generating a sense of trust.” (P19)</p>
Endorsers	“Nowadays yes [I believe in CSR initiatives], because companies are making sure they prove that what they’re doing is true. Even if it’s through influencers. (…) I think they try to get the image of people to prove that they’re truthful in what they transmit.” (P5)
Visible results	<p>“An authentic one, and I think that it’s because I’ve seen it for myself, is McDonald’s and Ronald McDonald houses. (…) I know it’s legitimate because I’ve seen it happening. (…) I think when there’s this direct testimonial from the person and not only from the company, it gives credibility to the situation.” (P10)</p> <p>“I think Unilever [I’d consider it authentic], because I remember reading about their projects. (…) I’d trust that because I’ve seen results.” (P11)</p>

Actions	
Consistency	<p>“If this multinational now starts talking about social responsibility and starts creating initiatives, but at the same time I know that there are some areas where they’re not socially responsible, then I’ll cancel my relationship with the company. (...) An organisation saying they now have a part dedicated to social responsibility is not enough, it has to be the whole organisation.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think the best way for companies to associate both [social and economic motivation] and not to lose themselves is by following the example of Patagonia. (...) Its objective is to fight environmental problems and get people to enjoy what the world and the company have to give at the same time.” (P14)</p> <p>“If it was a company that I knew it provided that service and that it actually helped institutions, but then they also did bad things, I don’t think it would have the same credibility as one company where you can see that the whole concept of the project is based on sustainability.” (P15)</p>
Commitment	<p>“[Regarding their values] I feel like they [Too Good To Go] have a lot of commitment.” (P10)</p>

Motives	
Selfish	<p>“Their [big companies] objective is to make money, not to help. They can help in a way, but it isn’t their main objective.” (P12)</p> <p>“I’d say that the majority of the intentions is to make profit.” (P17)</p> <p>“Nowadays there are “no free lunches” as one would say. They [companies] wouldn’t do that if they didn’t gain something from it.” (P18)</p>
Altruistic	<p>“I don’t believe they [Too Good To Go] do this only for economic benefit.” (P4)</p>
Irrelevant	<p>“Honestly, I don’t care if it [CSR] is authentic or not, as long as it exists. Even if a company has forced social responsibility, if they do it, then that’s enough for me.” (P2)</p> <p>“Sometimes, regardless of the motives, if they [companies] are doing something good for the world, why not? If it’s only to get more consumers (...), as long as they do well, then for me the rest is a little bit irrelevant.” (P10)</p> <p>“Maybe some companies do it to take advantage at the marketing level. But even so, what’s the harm in that? Maybe it’s more pleasant to think about the concept of doing marketing with a social cause in mind than with anything else that is persuading to something that doesn’t have as much meaning.” (P15)</p>

Aspects influencing CSR authenticity: Initiative side

Direct contribution	<p>“I spent 1€, but how do I know that a certain percentage went to as institution? I don’t know.” (P5)</p> <p>“(…) we know it [Too Good To Go’s initiative] is not just a front, because we can feel directly the benefits for both sides.” (P10)</p> <p>“(…) the product that they [Too Good To Go] are selling directly helps the social responsibility cause, then it’s obvious that I will trust them.” (P19)</p>	
Core vs complementary activity	<p>“Sometimes, when it [CSR initiative] is just a complementary activity, we question the reasons why they [companies] are doing that and if they really needed to do it.” (P3)</p> <p>“Any company that you can see that their concept is reusing or recycling. One in specific I just remembered Hydro Flask, which is a brand of water bottles that contributes for the cleaning up of the beaches and other environmental stuff.” (P15)</p>	
Benefit others	<p>“(…) [if Pingo Doce created a food waste initiative] it’s like deep down they want to benefit themselves and not benefit others. They would be taking advantage of their resources that would be wasted in order to get some more money.” (P3)</p> <p>“I only look at what is actually benefiting other people and if it’s harming others.” (P17)</p>	
Sense of belonging	<p>“They [Zara] don’t try to involve the consumer in what they do. (...) H&M had an initiative where they would ask for clothes that you no longer wanted and they would give you 1€ I think for each piece for them to reuse them. Meaning, they involved the consumer in the process (...)” (P14)</p> <p>“In Mind The Trash they’re still in the very beginning and they still have a very personal way to sell their product. I feel much closer to the people who are behind the company (...). It’s like I know the person and they seem really authentic and it looks like they really believe in the brand.” (P18)</p>	
Cause-company fit	Important	<p>“If I think about any company that is outside the food industry, it would be a little bit weird to think that they are developing a project in the area of food waste, when their business is totally different.” (P11)</p> <p>“IKEA has the restaurant part and they sell some food, but for me it isn’t a company that I associate with food. Maybe even in a strategic point of view it wouldn’t make much sense [to create a food waste initiative].” (P13)</p> <p>“If it was Nike I’d say that I find it a little bit weird because it is way out of their business.” (P14)</p> <p>“Pingo Doce, for example, they commercialise food. (...) So maybe they simply wouldn’t want to waste food and it wouldn’t be for-profit, maybe it would be more genuine [to create a food waste initiative].” (P17)</p> <p>“It ends up depending a lot on the cause. If it was anti-racism I wouldn’t believe it much, because they [Sony] are Japanese and they’re a little bit racist in general.” (P19)</p>
	Irrelevant	<p>“For me it doesn’t matter who the owner is [of the food waste initiative], as long as it’s a good idea and they’re doing something positive both for them and the clients (...). Either IKEA or Primark, it wouldn’t make any difference.” (P6)</p>

Aspects influencing CSR authenticity: Consumer side

Consumer-company identification	“If they [IKEA] create one of those initiatives I’ll trust 100%, because I know that their values are in line with mine.” (P7)
Brand attitude	<p>“On one side I think I’d trust Coca-Cola because (...) I love to buy it as a consumer.” (P5)</p> <p>“I’d trust them a lot, because I see IKEA as a responsible company and a company that worries about the environment, consumers and collaborators. I’ve always seen them as a reference company.” (P7)</p> <p>“Apple, being the biggest example of a capitalist company, doesn’t have the best motives behind that situation (...)” (P16)</p> <p>“I wouldn’t trust neither, but I’d trust more McDonald’s than Nike, because of the stories about a situation of almost slavery.” (P19)</p>
Preconceptions	<p>“I like IKEA and I believe IKEA is a company that has that type of concerns [sustainability], because IKEA, and this is an unsubstantiated conviction, but they’re Swedish.” (P2)</p> <p>“This might be super stereotyped, but I see IKEA as socially responsible (...), a lot because they’re a northern company.” (P8)</p> <p>“A preconception that I have is that big chains take advantage of that [CSR]. I think that smaller companies, when they start, I think they really believe in it.” (P18)</p>

Attitudes towards TGTG

Reasons to use	
Price	<p>“The main reason was definitely the money.” (P1)</p> <p>“You know that for a very low price you’re eating a meal that during the usual timetable would cost more and it still tastes good.” (P5)</p> <p>“With Too Good To Go I don’t feel like I’m paying more for a social cause, which is what usually happens with big companies, because of the use of sustainable materials that makes me pay more for the product. Here is the exact opposite, so for me as a consumer it’s the best of both worlds.” (P10)</p> <p>“The price is a really attractive factor.” (P15)</p>
Price-quality relationship	<p>“We used it because of its price-quality relationship.” (P10)</p>
Peer incentive	<p>“It was more because of my friend’s initiative. She encouraged me.” (P10)</p> <p>“The first reason was recommendation.” (P14)</p>
Social cause	<p>“Realising that I can have a role in this chain and that I can help fighting food waste, I think that was one of my main motivations.” (P11)</p> <p>“Obviously the social part implies my decision, otherwise I wouldn’t even use Too Good To Go.” (P16)</p> <p>“It helps fighting food waste, which is the main reason why I use the app.” (P18)</p>
Partner establishments	<p>“Because it was Nestlé. I had it in my favourites (...) and as soon as it had something I decided to try it.” (P12)</p> <p>“Honestly, my first purchase was because of the establishment itself.” (P4)</p>
Necessity	<p>“It’s really handy. Today I arrived from Algarve and I didn’t have any food to cook, so I just went for a magic box.” (P17)</p> <p>“It coincided with the fact that I had no time to cook for myself.” (P6)</p>
Curiosity	<p>“The first purchase was out of curiosity, to try to figure out how this worked.” (P3)</p> <p>“I think it was curiosity that called my attention.” (P5)</p>

Reasons to stop using	
Waste from other clients	“If I found out that the food wasn’t from what was left, but the scraps of another person.” (P6)
Price increase	“If they increased prices significantly.” (P15) “First, it would be the price. One of the good things about Too Good To Go is the price. If they start to increase prices, I think that one would stop using it.” (P17)
Inconsistency	“Only if it was something that discredited the values that the company is supposed to defend.” (P8) “Maybe if they were involved in a scandal, that is, they’re fighting food waste but then they had bad results in other areas of social responsibility. I think they have to be consistent.” (P11) “Probably if they associated themselves with a company that didn’t care about climate change.” (P18)
Lack of transparency	“If something was uncovered and it showed that they aren’t that transparent in the message that they’re transmitting.” (P10)
Economic greed	“If news got out saying that saving food wasn’t the reason for the app and that the company was highly capitalist and that was never their will.” (P16) “If their goal wasn’t to fight food waste, but all money related.” (P20)
Taking advantage of others	“If they were taking advantage of their own idea to exploit the restaurants.” (P12) “Maybe if they paid their employees badly.” (P13) “Something that implied that for them to save the food, then other people had to be jeopardised.” (P14) “If I found out that they don’t take good care of their partners.” (P19)
Against personal beliefs	“If I found out that they invest money in things that I don’t personally believe in.” (P13)

Service	
Experience	<p>“It’s great! Usually everything that I want is available and I’ve never had a disappointment or got something that didn’t match my expectations.” (P10)</p> <p>“We used it once and we weren’t very happy about it. (...) it was in a minimarket and we bought fruits and vegetables, but they were already rotten. We ended up throwing some of them in the trash anyway (...) those things should have been given away the day before.” (P13)</p> <p>“My experience was great! They gave us huge boxes, they were really nice and the food was still great. The payment was practical, the information was all in the app. It’s really simple.” (P14)</p> <p>“When it comes to bad experiences I’ve had a few, after the pandemic only though, where I ordered something and then I arrived at the restaurants and they were closed. Apart from that, my experience with Too Good To Go has been extremely positive.” (P16)</p>
Feelings	<p>“I feel good with myself and I feel like I’m doing something good.” (P1)</p> <p>“It ends up being a good sensation, almost as a heroic act, getting food that was going in the trash. It’s like saving the planet.” (P3)</p> <p>“The first time you go to a restaurant you feel hesitant, because you don’t know if you’ll get tricked.” (P12)</p> <p>“We were anxious. We really wanted to see what was coming. It brings a certain joy into your day, because you know you’re doing something good for society.” (P13)</p> <p>“I was surprised, because I didn’t think I would get that much food looking so good. And I was also shocked in the sense that if it wasn’t for me getting those magic boxes, then that big quantity of food would probably go in the trash and it was in perfect conditions.” (P18)</p>
Partnerships	<p>“(…) it was a little bit complicated for me, because I live a little bit far from Lisbon, so there weren’t many places to go.” (P1)</p> <p>“Where I live there aren’t many establishments.” (P7)</p> <p>“You have a crazy variety of places that you can choose from (...), you have it all over Lisbon, I don’t know about the rest of the country.” (P16)</p> <p>“They should have more partnerships.” (P19)</p>
Purchase regularity	<p>“I’ve only used it once.” (P11)</p> <p>“I like it a lot and I go there every day to see if it has something available.” (P12)</p> <p>“Not much, because of the accessibility in terms of transportation. If there was an expansion in the number of establishments it would be much easier to become a regular client.” (P15)</p> <p>“Lately I’d say I use it at least once per week.” (P16)</p> <p>“I got to know it 2 months ago and I’ve used it a lot, even today I went to pick up some food.” (P17)</p>

<p>Future purchase intentions</p>	<p>“I believe I can use it in the future, but it won’t be with that much frequency. (...)” (P2)</p> <p>“I think that for how easy it is for someone to get a meal, even though we have to go there, for the price that is asked and also for the good cause that is associated with the purchase. I think it’s a sustainable behaviour. For that reason, I intend to keep using it in the future.” (P4)</p> <p>“I highly recommend it and I will use it again. (...) I want to keep helping them in their initiative, because if they don’t have support, then it’s a good initiative that is wasted because of lack of adherence.” (P6)</p> <p>“I don’t think so, because it isn’t every day that I feel like buying a magic box, since I don’t know what I will get.” (P9)</p> <p>“My objective is to first check Too Good To Go before looking into restaurants that are on other apps.” (P10)</p>
<p>Surprise factor</p>	<p>“One criticism that I make to Too Good To Go is that, even though I know they can’t say exactly what the restaurants have, they could at least say the options more or less.” (P4)</p> <p>“(...) it isn’t every day that I feel like buying a magic box, since I don’t know what I will get.” (P9)</p> <p>“I’m a vegetarian and it doesn’t say what is coming inside the box, so it turns into something bad if I only receive meat and I can’t eat.” (P13)</p> <p>“Being a surprise makes you curious about what and how much you will get.” (P15)</p>
<p>Time frame</p>	<p>“One thing that is a little bit annoying is the fact that the time frame is only when the place closes.” (P1)</p> <p>“One problem with Too Good To Go is that many options for dinner are only available to pick up after 10pm and that is inconvenient.” (P2)</p> <p>“When you have to be at that place at a certain hour and you don’t know how your day will go, it’s a little bit difficult to plan.” (P13)</p> <p>“(...) you have infinite time frames. (...) I feel like at any time of the day I have the opportunity to go get food and give it a new life.” (P16)</p>
<p>Diet barriers</p>	<p>“I’m usually very careful about what I eat and that’s why I haven’t used it more.” (P12)</p> <p>“I’m a vegetarian and it doesn’t say what is coming inside the box, so it turns into something bad if I only receive meat and I can’t eat.” (P13)</p>
<p>No home delivery</p>	<p>“The only disadvantage is the inconvenience of having to go pick it up.” (P10)</p> <p>“When you have no car it’s more complicated.” (P13)</p> <p>“I know it’s hard taking into account their values of trying to decrease carbon emissions, but if they had the delivery option I think they would have more users.” (P18)</p>

Company	
Multi-win situation	<p>“It fights food waste and it also benefits the ones who buy the food for cheaper prices. They facilitate the whole process and at the same time they contribute in a way that the partners end up earning a little bit extra than they would earn if that food was wasted.” (P3)</p> <p>“I feel like there are only advantages here, in the sense that for me it’s cheaper, restaurants are able to earn something without throwing the food in the trash and even food waste decreases.” (P10)</p> <p>“I think it’s a great idea, because it has multi-sided benefits. For us who can get much cheaper food, for the establishments that make less waste and (...) can gain something from that, and also for the creators who get a part of the sales.” (P17)</p>
Trust	<p>“It’s a company that brings me some confidence, because it works in many directions (...)” (P3)</p> <p>“It has a big positive impact and I trust the company.” (P6)</p> <p>“They have a business model that allows people to see that they’re really making a social contribution, so I trust them.” (P5)</p>
Solution to a problem	<p>“There was the easy solution of throwing the food away, but at least now they can still make some money in a more supportive way.” (P5)</p> <p>“I think they tried to find a solution for a problem that existed.” (P18)</p>
Utility	<p>“I think they have an important role, because it’s unnecessary to throw food in the trash. I think it’s an app that everybody should have, even if it’s just to use once. If everybody uses it at least once, then that is already a lot of food that isn’t wasted.” (P6)</p> <p>“Up until now, I think they have some viability as a way to fight food waste.” (P18)</p> <p>“I think sometimes people wouldn’t think about such things and though their work an idea is created and people support it and it has been working.” (P20)</p>
Enlightening	<p>“Food waste was something that I started to realise (...) a little bit through Too Good To Go actually, because I wasn’t that much aware about the problem, but the app itself explains a lot about waste. (...) From the moment that I installed the app on, I started to be a lot more careful about what I consumed at home and what I bought in the supermarket.” (P1)</p> <p>“At least for me they were my first contact with this initiative. Before that I never thought much about what happened to the food inside restaurants (...) then I met Too Good To Go and I realised that there is actually a huge waste, so I think they have a fundamental role.” (P3)</p>
Impact	<p>“Not yet [have impact], but only because of their dimension. They’re still small.” (P2)</p> <p>“I believe they have [impact], but not at a great level, because they haven’t got there yet (...)” (P7)</p> <p>“Maybe the idea that we have about food waste is not the same anymore because of this company. That is, they are having a great environmental impact.” (P14)</p>

<p>The bigger the better</p>	<p>“The more they grow, the bigger will their network be and the more benefits will exist. (...) A big company that focuses on mass production, as much as they want to decrease their footprint, it’s a lot more difficult. On the other hand, Too Good To Go has no disadvantage, because the more it grows, the bigger will its contribute be.” (P15)</p>
<p>Taking advantage of the social problem</p>	<p>“I want to believe that they didn’t taking advantage of the social cause and that it is genuinely for a good cause. Of course that if they can benefit from that, then great! I believe that the idea came first from doing something good and not to create profit at the expenses of the cause.” (P8)</p> <p>“Yes, they are definitely taking advantage of this social problem.” (P17)</p> <p>“I think they tried to find a solution for a problem that they believed in rather than tried to take advantage of that for personal benefit.” (P18)</p>

TGTG and CSR authenticity

Company side	
Born from CSR	<p>“In this case, since the brand was created with this initiative as its base, it ends up bringing more trust into what they’re doing, because, if they went through all the trouble of creating a company thinking about this issue, it’s because they’re really willing to fight.” (P3)</p> <p>“(…) it’s a company that was born and that its first ideals came from sustainability. So the company was developed with that purpose and that’s beautiful by itself.” (P16)</p>
Shared value	<p>“All companies and businesses are born from problems that exist in society and from trying to solve those problems. If this company by chance took a social problem (…) and if they could find a way to profit from that, even better. That’s the business that everybody wants, which is being able to help society and at the same time make profit.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think they noticed the problem and wanted to fight it and at the same time get some benefits.” (P3)</p> <p>“Their business model is exactly the base of what they advocate, that is, everything is connected. If they didn’t want to help people, they wouldn’t even have the company. They can’t even separate the two parts.” (P14)</p>
Life stage	<p>“Since it’s something more recent (...), I have the impression that it really is something with an authentic intention behind it.” (P8)</p>
Firm size	<p>“I’d believe more in Too Good To Go for being a smaller company (...).” (P8)</p> <p>“I see things differently, because it’s a smaller company and I think they still have that ambition of being good.” (P9)</p>
Focus	<p>“For all I know they only focus on working with the restaurants and supermarkets to try and fight food waste there.” (P13)</p>
Transparency	<p>“I think that everything that is happening there is in plain sight.” (P19)</p>
Consistency	<p>“I think that because of their mission and of the way they articulate everything they do, even because of the tips they suggest (...), they end up doing everything in a consistent way and according to their values.” (P3)</p>
Commitment	<p>“(…) what looks like from the outside and what I feel is that they are a committed company (...).” (P3)</p>
Motives	<p>“I don’t believe that they do this purely for economic benefits.” (P4)</p> <p>“I really like the way they do their work, I think they have good motivations (...).” (P7)</p> <p>“Generosity with people.” (P9)</p> <p>“(…) educate the consumers for the cause, that is, they have this educational side. It also revolves around citizenship. I think it’s really educate, compromise and responsibility.” (P10)</p> <p>“I’d say they want to profit (...). I don’t judge, I just think that their motives aren’t 100% to help social problems.” (P17)</p> <p>“I trust the message, but if someone tells me that that’s all there is to it, I wouldn’t believe it (...).” (P19)</p>

Initiative side	
Direct contribution	<p>“While in the fashion stores that I mentioned before you just buy a piece of clothing but you don’t know which kind of environmental policies are applied, in Too Good To Go it’s really direct.” (P4)</p> <p>“In the case of Too Good To Go it’s even more obvious [CSR authenticity], because you can directly contribute, so you know that you’re contributing to fight food waste.” (P5)</p>
Core business	<p>“[Being their core activity] makes a difference, because their business is totally focused on food waste (...)” (P4)</p> <p>“The core business of Too Good To Go is exactly this! [fight against food waste]” (P11)</p>
Community	<p>“It also helps restaurants to have a better connection with their clients.” (P1)</p> <p>“(…) they contribute in a way that the partners end up earning a little bit extra than they would earn if that food was wasted.” (P3)</p> <p>“(…) in a way, they support local businesses and give them a certain visibility.” (P8)</p> <p>“When I say commitment, I mean it towards the community, both with the restaurants and the client.” (P10)</p> <p>“I feel like many restaurants might use it to develop and make publicity of their own brand. (...) of all places I’ve been to with Too Good To Go, I feel like I only knew one. Three days ago I went to a grocery shop where they gave me such unbelievable products that I’ll start going there from now on.” (P16)</p>
Sense of belonging	<p>“The feeling that Too Good To Go provides is that they’re doing that for you and the planet (...), the sensation of being part of something.” (P3)</p> <p>“The biggest impact is made when you directly involve the consumer (...) and Too Good To Go does that, their business model includes involving the consumer.” (P14)</p>
Cause-company fit	<p>“(…) their business is totally focused on food waste and that’s really direct.” (P4)</p>

Consumer side	
Consumer-company identification	<p>“I identify myself with them a lot, up to the point that I even wanted to work for them and I applied for a job there.” (P1)</p> <p>“(…) it’s a philosophy that I’d like to include in my professional career in some way. Find social or environmental problems and be able to find creative solutions to be able to at least help a little bit in fighting those problems.” (P2)</p> <p>“I think that both mine and the company’s values are based on a sustainable and conscious lifestyle. I think that’s why I identify with them. The fact that we’re both making conscious choices is one of the big connections that I create with the company.” (P3)</p> <p>“If we were two people, I’d go for a drink with Too Good To Go, because it meets exactly what I think, which is this conciliation between the economic and social parts.” (P16)</p>
Brand attitude	<p>“I thought that it’s completely amazing, I thought that it was one of the most amazing apps (...), so I have a really good impression about them.” (P1)</p> <p>“I realised that they’re a brand that really embraces social responsibility and the fight against waste (...)” (P3)</p> <p>“I think that the brand has an approach and a concern that many other companies should have.” (P15)</p>