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The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on South African Consumer Behaviour

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Administration

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive business environment, a company which understands the reasons why consumers chose to purchase their product or service instead of their competitors' should be able to use these reasons to gain competitive advantage.

As more consumers are becoming aware of social causes and believe that businesses should play their part to improve the country's social welfare, companies in South Africa are looking at ways to become more socially responsible. The question in the minds of these companies though, is whether their participation in social projects increases consumer loyalty, or whether brand, price and quality still play a pivotal role in the decision making process.

This exploratory study investigated the key attributes that impact on consumers' behaviour in respect of corporate social responsibility, brand, quality and price. Furthermore the research determined, out of eight kinds of social activities, which were the most important in the mind of the consumer.

Applying the conjoint analysis technique, the study established that corporate social responsibility was the highest rated attribute, far exceeding the other attributes of brand, price and quality. The study also reflected that child welfare was the highest rated social cause.

These findings illustrate the necessity for companies to invest in social activities, which will assist with the creation of a favourable corporate image among their consumers.

DECLARATION

I, Belinda Munger, declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of The Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Day of **2006**

DEDICATION

To my mom and dad, who I know, would be so proud to see me obtain this degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Geoff Bick for his guidance and support through this process.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the research topic

According to Lantos (2001), while spending on social causes has been around for many years, the need for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become increasingly more important over the last decade. There has been significant growth in the number of consumers in predominantly first world countries who have changed their purchasing decisions to include ethical consideration (Fairbrass, 1998).

Multinational companies are coming more and more under the scrutiny of different audiences. NGOs (Non government organisations which include political parties, trade unions and employer's organisations), the media and global activism along with the growing number of special interest groups are making demands on companies to become more socially active. Futurists predict that an organisation will be judged more by their social policies than on their delivery of products and services, and that key audiences will become more influential. Moreover global inequality has brought issues of morality and responsibility onto the public agenda (Daugherty, 2001).

Various initiatives have been put in place in South Africa, for example, The King Report on Corporate Governance of 2002 (referred to as King 2) and the Social Responsibility Index, which has put the spotlight on corporate behaviour (The CSI Handbook, 2003). The primary aim of The CSI Handbook is to educate and inform those who wish to reward the companies, which are highlighted as making the largest contribution to corporate responsibility programmes. In 2004, Anglo American, ABSA, Telkom, Eskom and SAB were among the top five most widely recognised corporates in South Africa in terms of grant makers.

While there are various reasons for the existence of a company, predominantly the maximising of wealth of the company's shareholders, there is also a purpose of

society in respect of supplying a good quality product at an acceptable price while still being socially responsible (Palmer, van der Walt, Vrba, De Klerk & Pitout, 1992). Juholin (2004) however suggests that one of the prominent driving forces behind CSR is the companies' long-tem profitability.

Creyer & Ross (1997) believed that consumers care about the way a company does business, but stated that further research needed to be done in order to identify the ethical dimensions used by consumers to evaluate corporate behaviour. They concluded that further research into what consumers care about, how much they care and under what circumstances they care needed to be undertaken.

Miller (2002) indicated that since 11 September 2001, 81% of Americans would switch brands, with price and quality remaining equal, if a company supported a good cause.
There is still, however conflicting opinion as to whether CSR has any effect on consumer behaviour and whether the promotion of CSR programmes has any influence on brand preference.

Studies have been undertaken in first world countries, which have produced this conflicting information but to date no known study has been done in South Africa. This research report will establish whether companies in South Africa who have adopted CSR initiatives are able to influence consumer behaviour in respect of their purchasing decisions.

1.2 Overview of the research problem

The research problem is to evaluate the role of corporate social responsibility in influencing consumer behaviour in South Africa and to ascertain whether specific CSR causes are more influential than others in purchasing decision-making.

1.2.1 Sub - Problems

a. To identify whether the participation of companies in CSR initiatives affect the purchasing decisions of consumers.

b. To understand the relative importance of CSR as a purchasing criterion.

c. To assess whether the consumer rates specific CSR causes more important than others in respect of the choice of goods or services purchased.

1.3 Assumptions

Companies will continue to embark on CSR programmes in the future on a voluntary basis.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The limited resources of the researcher necessitated choosing a limited non-probability sample of self-selected respondents. Although the sample was probably random in nature, it cannot be confirmed that it was representative of the entire South African population.

The researcher did not analyse the effect of the rand amount of CSR spend and the study focussed on the products of companies that have already embarked on CSR programmes.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review begins with a definition and history of CSR and the need for companies to participate in order to meet minimum regulatoryl requirements. The profit motive is argued and while the research does not include this component, the researcher felt it was important as an increase in awareness of a company's ethical behaviour and acceptance thereof could ultimately lead to increased profits. In contrast to the profit motive, altruistic CSR is explained as another facet of a company's reason to improve its image.

The body of the literature review focuses on the behaviour of consumers in their decision making based on the variables which will be researched namely brand, price, quality and CSR. The literature review concludes with current CSR initiatives in South Africa.

2.2 Definition of CSR

There have long been conflicting expectations of the nature of companies' responsibilities to society. For those companies that do undertake what might be termed as CSR, what can be defined as socially responsible behaviour as opposed to merely the management of corporate image?

The concept of CSR cannot be easily defined. It is perceived that the consumer appears to care about ethical behaviour but a company is not considered ethical or socially responsible if it merely adheres to the minimum requirements of the law. It needs to go beyond these regulations and become more altruistic. Business ethics have become a dominating factor in the decision making process, for both marketing departments as well as for consumers (Davis, 1973). Ethics is generally referred to as the set of morals, principles or values that guide the behaviour of an individual or company (Sherwin, 1983).

CSR, according to Bloom & Gundlach (2001:142), can be defined as “The obligations of the firm to its *stakeholders* – people and groups who can affect or who are affected by corporate policies and practices. These obligations go beyond legal requirements and the company’s duties to its shareholders. Fulfilment of these obligations is intended to minimise any harm and maximize the long-run beneficial impact of the firm on society.”

The criteria for CSR are difficult to define because, outside of legal or other obligations, they can be considered subjective in nature – what is responsible for one, may be irresponsible for another. Absolute standards of corporate responsibility do not exist, and they may change within each generation and in terms of culture as well (Daugherty, 2001).

CSR programmes may entail creating a product with socially responsible attributes, such as pesticide free or non- animal tested ingredients. It can include characteristics such as skills development, employee welfare and local community programmes. CSR may also involve intangible attributes such as reputation for reliability and quality (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

In summary, CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

2.3 History of CSR

Vercic & Gurnig (1995) traced the phases of CSR since the beginning of the 1900's. The concept of the public responsibility of companies was developed when managers of railway companies had to persuade the public that mergers were in their best interest.

However, Lantos (2001) maintained that prior to the 1960's, business ethics was not a major concern for shareholders, which was demonstrated by exploitive labour practices, unsafe working environments, bribery and corruption. In the mid 1970's, the consumer's outcries had been noticed and the raising of social conscience became popular with large corporations in the United States of America (USA). Since the 1970's, society's expectations of business ethics have been on the increase.

According to Chewning, Eby & Roels (1990), from the second half of the twentieth century, businesses were judged not only by their financial performance but also by their moral deeds. In the 1990's the pace of social awareness increased as recognition grew of government's failure to address social problems (Smith, 2001).

The Ethical Purchasing Index, published by the Co-operative Bank in the United Kingdom (UK), showed rapid growth in ethical products and services in the UK. It recorded 19.86 billion pounds worth of ethical consumption products and services were sold in 2002, while 2.6 billion pounds were lost by big brands boycotted by consumers, confirming that UK consumers were beginning to exercise their ethical muscles by boycotting what they consider ethically unsound brands. The most widespread boycotts included Nestle, Esso and the brands of animal testing companies such as Procter and Gamble and L'Oreal (In-store, 2004).

It is demonstrated by history that CSR has become an important issue in the eyes of the general public and needs to be addressed by companies now and in the future.

2.3.1 Legal requirements

Many companies participate in CSR because they have to. Regulations can govern how a company must act ethically, however current laws only provide a minimum guideline. Causal responsibility, while falling outside the ambit of the law, pressures companies to correct any harm they might cause. In the USA, for example, jury verdicts have held manufacturers responsible for injuries caused by their products (Lantos, 2001).

In the United Kingdom, one of the Ten-Minute Rule Bills passed was a bill that required companies with an annual turnover in excess of five million pounds to produce social and environmental reports. The supporters of this bill believe that social volunteerism has failed and they needed legislation in order to ensure companies were becoming more socially responsible (Cook, 2003).

The above illustrates that there are still a number of companies who are not wiling to participate in voluntary CSR programmes and require legislation to ensure they at least partake in ethical activity.

2.4 The profit motive

There is an indirect link between brand preference and profitability in that an increased market share should result from brand preference through CSR initiatives, which should ultimately lead to higher profits (Aupperle, Carroll & Hatfield, 1985).

The most prevalent argument against CSR to date, however, is the profit motive. Carr (1996) stated that the sole purpose of a business is to generate profits and that business people have lower moral standards than the rest of society. With this in mind, he believes that the only place for social responsibility is having to adhere to the law. Levitt (1983) agreed and highlighted that the only social responsibility of a company need be the elementary ideas of honesty and good faith.

Friedman (1970), a neo-classical economist, defended the view that companies are established to maximise profits and believed that only an individual, and not a company, can have responsibilities and that CSR is therefore the responsibility of the individuals within a company. Those who adopt this approach believe that the only social responsibility of a company is to provide employment and pay taxes. Friedman (1962:133) confirmed this view with “few trends would so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their shareholders as they possibly can.”

Studies held to establish whether there is a link between CSR and profitability have proven difficult. Parket & Eilbirt (1975) observed that there were no accounting techniques or tools that would be able to objectively differentiate companies that were responsible from those who were not.

Luo & Bhattacharya (2006) argued that there were several conditions under which either a positive or negative relationship between CSR and the market value of a company could be determined. They believed the level of innovation and product quality of the business influenced the consumers’ perception of the company and that while it was important for a company to invest in good causes, it should ensure it maintains high levels of innovation as “it is likely that CSR initiatives fail to generate a favourable impact if the firm is perceived as less innovative and offering

poor quality products." (Luo & Battacharya, 2006:4). They concluded that if a company was not innovative, it created negative perceptions about its CSR spend as the consumer believed that these monies should have been rather spent improving the company's products or services.

In the mid 1970's, Parket & Eilbirt (1975) undertook a study of 96 CSR companies, listed in the Fortune 500 and measured them against all the Fortune 500 companies based on net income, profit margin, return on equity and earnings per share. It was found that 80 of the firms proved to be more profitable on all four measures. In the early 2000's, a study by Governance Metrics International, which rates companies by their governance policies, environmental activities & labour practices found that the highest ranked firms outperformed the market while those ranked low did not (Gunther, 2003).

In the early 2000's, the FTSE4Good was established on the London Stock exchange and the Dow Jones Sustainability Index in New York. They measure the performance of listed companies that are considered socially responsible. Should these indices outperform the general market, they could be used as a measure to determine the effect of CSR on the financial performance of a company (Cook, 2003).

Advocates of CSR want to tie up both profit and purpose and it is stated in theory that socially responsible companies will do better than their peers in the future by seizing new opportunities and building up their reputations (Gunther, 2003).

It can therefore be argued that in order to gain market share and improve profitability, companies should ensure their behaviour falls within ethical boundaries set by their key stakeholders. Proponents of CSR claim that it is in enlightened self-interest for companies to undertake various forms of CSR. The

benefits to companies might include enhanced reputation and greater employee loyalty and retention (Moir 2001).

In view of the fact that there is insufficient and inconclusive research on whether the profit motive can be linked to socially responsible motives, this topic needs to be researched further.

2.5 Altruistic CSR

Carroll (2000: 199) believed that being a good corporate citizen means giving back to society and feels that these companies will ultimately “reap what they have sown”.

Unlike using CSR programmes to create positive brand equity and consequently yield a return on investment, with altruistic CSR this is not the primary motive (Lantos, 2001). Davis (1975) claimed, as one of his five propositions for social responsibility, that companies are obliged to embark on CSR programmes where there is a societal need without an ulterior motive. He believed that a company will benefit from a better society just as an individual would.

While providing amenities to a community where most of its employees stay, for example, and calling it altruistic CSR, companies will benefit in the long run by being able to attract more desirable employees and possibly reduce the wage bill and losses from pilferage. It can be argued that the companies, by doing this, are really just looking after their own self- interest and are not acting out of altruism (Friedman, 1970).

Those against altruistic CSR firmly believe that a company is there to make a profit and by generating higher profits, everyone will benefit. Employees will earn higher wages and as the company grows, it will be able to employ more people. Taxes through profits will also eventually be used to uplift the community (Lantos, 2001).

In contrast, Novak (1996) believed that companies are not welfare agencies and have limited responsibilities. He felt that by adding CSR programmes to the demands of the company, the primary stakeholders would suffer as resources are used elsewhere and considered this as equal to stealing shareholder's money.

Whether altruistic or not, companies need to avoid controversial causes which can create negative publicity. In the USA, a company donated funds to Planned Parenthood only to be heavily criticised by pro-lifers. When the same company contributed to the pro- life groups in order to appease them, they had to endure the wrath of the pro-choicers. Companies should, according to Carroll (2001), therefore target causes that will be favourably received by their primary target market.

While goodwill efforts might come from altruistic desires, experts say these efforts can also build brand awareness and loyalty better than some million dollar advertising campaigns (Comiteau, 2003).

2.6 The demand for CSR

While some companies undertake CSR initiatives due to regulatory factors, consumer demand is fast becoming a vital reason to embark on such initiatives.

There is strong evidence that many consumers are beginning to value CSR attributes and a growing number of companies are incorporating CSR into their business strategies. The Body Shop has been named in various journal articles as being one of the more popular socially responsible companies that has successfully used CSR in their marketing campaigns, primarily due to their claim of using only products which benefit the communities they are produced in and not using products where animal testing is involved (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

Consumers of the twenty first century are claiming to be caring, environmentally and socially aware and are demanding a say in production, processing and resourcing of the products they regularly purchase. These increasingly well informed consumers are not only demanding fairly traded products, but are challenging manufacturers and retailers to guarantee the ethical claims they are making about their products (Strong, 1996).

According to Richards (1995), around 70% of consumers in the USA would switch brands if they believed they would be helping a cause that they liked; and 60% would change retailers for the same reason. She concluded that consumers are now demanding more information on the companies that manufacture the products.

A Cone and Roper study (Simon, 1995) identified 85% of their respondents as having a more positive image about a company that undertook CSR programmes but noted that only 15% would be prepared to spend more in order to purchase their product. Creyer & Ross (1997) however, found that the ethical behaviour of a company was an important decision making criteria and consumers in the USA were prepared to pay higher prices to reward such behaviour. He also determined that consumers would still purchase from unethical companies but would only be prepared to pay a lower price.

According to a Dragon International (1991) study, only 26% of respondents were able to name any socially responsible companies with only 18% being able to identify the ‘least socially responsible’ companies. This study illustrated that in fact consumers are not really that well informed. Nevertheless it was concluded in the study that the link between CSR and the consumer’s purchasing decision were still in the early stages and it was believed that it would develop further. Nicholls (2002) argued that there was a cultural shift towards ethical purchasing being driven by a

rise in the volume of easily accessible information about global issues. Increased media engagement with the subject, and the growth of the use of the Internet to publish and disseminate information are also cited as reasons for an increasing informed ethical consumer.

Dragon International (1991) is contradicted by a study undertaken in the UK, where a consumer survey revealed that a quarter of the respondents purchased fairly traded products on a regular basis. Fairly traded products are those products purchased under equitable trade agreements, involving cooperative rather than competitive trading principles, ensuring a fair price and fair working conditions for the producers and suppliers. In addition it was found that 24% of the respondents made every effort to buy ethical products and 11% actually did so (Strong, 1996).

The above conflicting studies can be explained by Boulstridge & Carrigan's (2000) report where it was determined that although consumers expressed a willingness to make ethical purchases, the reality was that CSR was not a dominant criteria in their purchasing decision, even with knowledge about unethical activity. Others argued that it was the lack of information that social responsibility was not high on their purchasing agenda and if they liked and regularly bought a product, they would find it hard to boycott it over unethical behaviour. The most important purchasing criteria were price, value quality and brand familiarity and consumers bought for personal reasons rather than societal ones.

A further study in the USA, consisting of two focus groups, whose objective was to look at some of the contradictory assumptions concluded in prior studies as well as to determine the importance of ethical behaviour in the decision making process compared to that of quality and price, ascertained that consumers' decision in respect of ethical behaviour was predominantly passive and they relied on information being supplied about the company than actively seeking it out. While

price and quality were more important than CSR, most respondents stated that if they were made aware of unethical behaviour, this would influence their purchasing decision (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

The above study concluded that the key determinants for the demand of a product with CSR attributes were: price, advertising to promote CRS awareness, level of disposable income, taste and preferences, demographics and the price of the substitute product.

Table 1 presents these determinants and the predicted effect of each on the demand for CSR attributes. Whether demand increases or decreases is denoted by either positive or negative and it is noted that some determinants were not easily predictable.

Table 1: Determinants of consumer demand for CSR attributes

Determinant	Hypothesized effect on demand
Price of good with CSR attributes	Negative
Advertising	Positive
Income	Positive
Tastes	Indeterminate
Demographics	Indeterminate
Price of substitute good	Positive

Source: McWilliams & Siegel (2001:120)

Sproles, Geitsfeld & Badenhop (1978) argued that consumers needed to be more informed about which companies were ethical and which were unethical as this would have an influence over their purchasing decision. As the media is the primary source of most of the information regarding CSR, Sproles *et al* (1978)

believed that companies needed to publicise their CSR programmes. As marketing efforts have become complex, it has also become extremely difficult for consumers to accurately compare product value. This may explain why, when questioned about ethical purchasing, consumers would state that they cannot perceive any difference between the ethics of one company versus another (Carrigan & Attala, 2001).

Carrigan, Szmigin & Wright (2004) concluded that purchasing decisions were being made on incomplete and unreliable knowledge and that this was a barrier to more committed ethical purchasing by consumers. It was also argued that more reliable and trustworthy advertising would have a greater impact and making it convenient to be an ethical shopper was an important factor in their study. However in Boulstridge & Carrigan's (2000) study, when respondents were asked if they would make alternate purchasing decisions if more information was made available to them, some respondents said it would make no difference, while others stated it would add to the confusion and making buying more difficult. Therefore it was concluded that having so much knowledge on consumer products could actually detract from, rather than enhance choice. The additional burden of having to trade off ethical information, alongside price, quality and other factors seemed almost too much for consumers to deal with. Respondents in this study were not adverse to the publication of information concerning ethical behaviour but they simply felt it would do little to change their purchasing behaviour.

Despite the above studies, membership of pressure groups and organisations concerned with environmental, ecological and conservation issues showed remarkable growth between 1981 and 1992, which demonstrates an increase in public concern and support of these organisations. The particular growth in membership of conservation organisations confirms growing public awareness of environmental and ethical issues and a willingness to do something about these

concerns (Strong, 1996). Strong (1996) however admitted that this does not directly reflect a growth in ethical consumerism, but does indicate that there is a tendency for these consumers to become ethically responsive. It has been claimed that consumers are becoming more caring, that they understand commercial motives, and that they are interested in corporate behaviour beyond the areas that directly affect them. Ethical trading relations with the Third World are now being recognised as a factor in consumer choice (Fletcher, 1990).

The dramatic increase in environmental awareness over recent decades has resulted in the emergence of 'green' consumerism. Many studies have explored green consumer concerns however it has been revealed that consumer concerns have more recently become much broader and 'macro- level'. It has been found that in addition to environmental concerns, ethical consumers were now also concerned about areas including animal issues, irresponsible selling, armaments and oppressive regimes (Shaw & Shiu, 2003).

In conclusion, although consumers may express a desire to support companies that undertake CSR programmes, and punish those that don't, their actual purchasing behaviour to date, has remained mainly unaffected by ethical issues. The media is an important source of informing of ethical products and services and corporate communication could be important on providing credible, accessible and reliable information, as authenticity of source is a key factor in convincing the ethical purchaser.
Perhaps it is not that consumers do not care, but rather that they care more about price, quality and brand than corporate ethics.

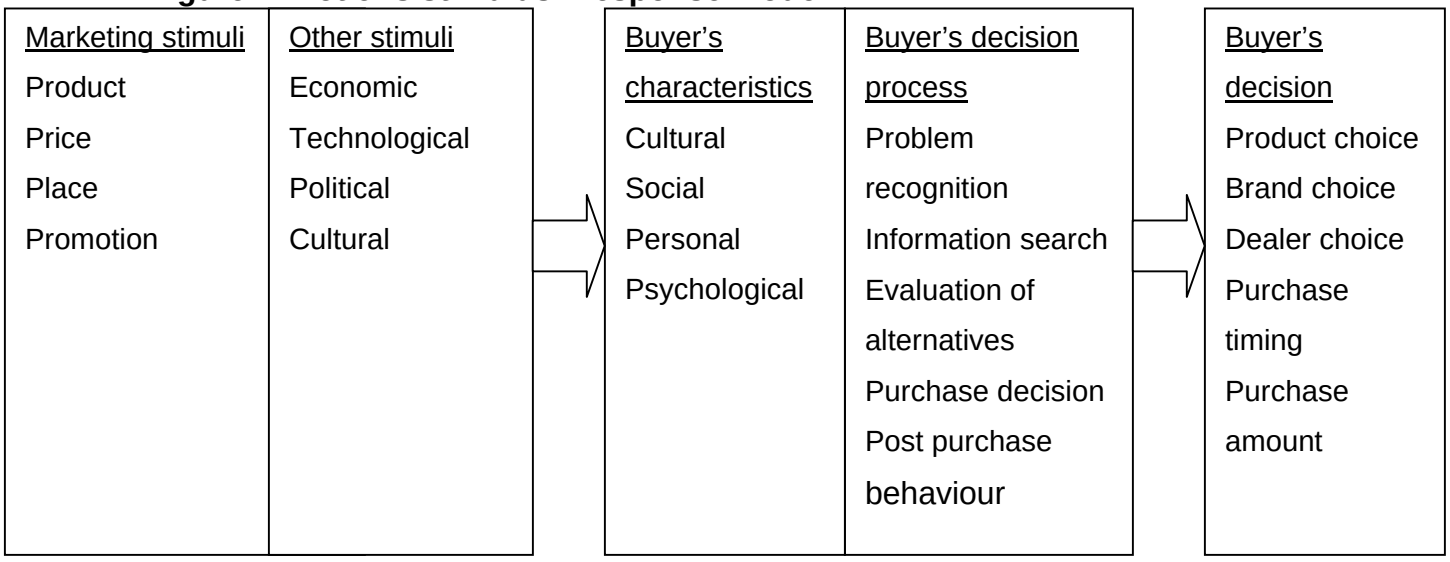
2.7 Consumer behaviour and CSR

The scale and complexity of choice in recent decades has been subject to exponential growth that has taken consumers into a new landscape,

unrecognisable a generation ago, where choices have grown beyond what previously thought possible, making it more difficult for the average consumer to make decisions and select desired products and services. A huge, additional burden of ethical, ecological and health considerations have also fallen onto consumers. Consumption choices today are subject to interventions from the media and pressure groups who have increased in visibility. These additional considerations, however, can be used to limit choice as well as making it more complex. For example, a respondent in a study about choice in consumer's lives mentioned that buying only organic food was the way she managed her choices (Nelson, 2002).

Kotler's (2000) stimulus-response model of buyer behaviour assists in the clarification of the principle of consumer behaviour. In the model below, both marketing stimuli and other macro-economic stimuli are filtered through the buyer's characteristics by a decision making process which leads to a final purchasing decision. The key to understanding consumer behaviour is to understand or to attempt to influence the buyer's characteristics.

Figure 1: Kotler's stimulus - response model



Source: Kotler (2000:161)

Foxall (1999) argued that human behaviour is a function of social and physical settings regardless of the personal characteristics of the individuals. In a study he concluded, he observed that it was easier to predict the behaviour of people moving between environments based on their new surroundings than their personal psychologies. Each environment's unique pattern of behaviour persists over time, although the people who reproduce this behaviour pass through on a weekly/daily/hourly basis and are replaced by others, confirmed Wicker (1987).

Thompson (1995) noted that consumer knowledge about CSR had increased due to the many studies that have been conducted, and marketers needed to focus on efficient communication about the benefits of a CSR related brand in order to get the consumer to significantly differentiate the one brand from another. It is however dependent on who is doing the actual purchasing of the product or service as to whether there would be a low or high consumer involvement in the purchasing decision (De Chernatony & McDonald, 1998). Past research suggested that negative information influences consumer attitudes more than positive information. If this research could be considered true, it would be expected that consumers who are aware of information on a company's unethical behaviour should boycott their products while knowing about a company's ethical behaviour would not necessarily persuade consumers to buy their products (Carrigan & Atalla, 2001).

There is conflicting research to date on the reasoning of consumers to support or reject the ethical or unethical conduct of companies. A poll conducted in the UK suggested that one third of consumers were 'seriously concerned' with ethical issues and over half had purchased a product or recommended a company on the basis of its ethical reputation (Mason, 2000). This corresponds with Forte &

Lamont's (1998) research where they discovered that consumers were increasingly making purchases on the basis of the company's role in society.

Creyer & Ross (1997) proved a positive relationship exists between consumer preference for a company's products and the extent to which their perceptions about the CSR undertaken by the company, exceeded their expectations. Many authors agreed that a company's CSR record created a general context in how the consumer's behaviour patterns were influenced, and in most instances a preference for a new product being purchased was based on the overall evaluation of the company that manufactured the product (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

However, further consensus found that, in many studies, quality, price and value for money were stronger motivations for purchasing than ethical considerations (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000). Although several consumers stated that they had a desire to see companies behave ethically, they admitted that this could be compromised if they wished to buy a particular product or service. Irwin (1999) suggested that this is a conflict, rather than a disregard for ethics on the part of the consumer. Their desire for a lower price, or a specific branded product was stronger, and therefore in conflict with their desire to make an ethical purchasing decision. From findings in past research, it has yet to be shown that consumers who care about CSR would translate those attitudes into ethical purchasing decisions.

Time pressure has been noted as a factor for consumer behaviour, which has lead to consumers being more harassed and stressed in their everyday lives and which subsequently resulted in consumers curtailing their information gathering activities (Cutler, 1990). Titus & Bradford (1996) concurred, stating that consumers simply did not have time to take into account the ethical aspects of their purchases as they were rushing around a supermarket or shopping centre.

While some academics agreed that western consumer sophistication should ensure more ethical behaviour due to the fact that consumers were better informed, more educated and were more aware of consumer rights, Titus & Bradford (1996) argued that consumer sophistication was no guarantee that consumers actually participated in ethical buying practices. They believed there is a difference between sophisticated consumer characteristics and sophisticated consumer behaviour as it is not enough to process the prerequisite knowledge and ability to make efficient consumer decisions, but they must also act in accordance with that knowledge. There are those committed consumers who do seek out environmentally friendly products, and boycott those companies perceived as being unethical and for them information guides their ethical purchasing behaviour. Other consumers, who possessed the same information in terms of ethical and unethical companies, did not necessarily make their purchasing decisions based on this information (Titus & Bradford, 1996).

There appears to be a gap between attitude and behaviour in ethical purchasing, which was highlighted in a study of UK consumer attitudes to financial ethics. It was reported that there was a rise in consumer ethical awareness, with 47% of respondents stating they would not use a financial organisation they felt to be ethically unsound. Given that 80% of UK consumers bank with the ‘big four’ banks, with Natwest being one of them, having stated they are financially involved with animal testing centres, caused a conflict. The fact that consumers appear to be saying one thing and behaving in another way with regard to ethics, could explain this conflict or confirm they lacked knowledge and awareness in order to be able to make ethical decisions (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

In Carrigan & Attalla’s (2001) study on ethical behaviour, there were contradictions within the responses from the respondents when they stated that a greater

awareness of unethical activity would affect their purchase behaviour but when prompted with specific products, it appeared that they were only willing to be selectively ethical. The importance of brand image with products such as clothing took preference over ethical criteria and unless the consumer could buy ethically and retain fashion status, they would not boycott unethical brand leaders. It seemed less of an issue when it came to food purchases and if given sufficient information about ethical/unethical behaviour, there was more of a chance the consumer would make an ethical purchase.

Carrigan & Atalla (2001) developed a matrix, which categorised the consumer into four types based on their attitude towards ethical purchasing. This matrix was developed due to the conflicting research that they believed may have led consumers in the past to respond with inaccurate statements in ethical consumer surveys.

Figure 2: Consumer attitudes to ethical purchasing

	High ethical awareness	**Low ethical awareness**
High ethical purchase intention	Caring and Ethical	Confused and Uncertain
Low ethical purchase intention	Cynical and Disinterested	Oblivious

Source: Carrigan & Attalla (2001: 578)

They explained that ‘caring and ethical’ consumers make it their business to discriminate for and against ethical and unethical companies, and are likely to respond positively to genuine ethical behaviour. This has to be tempered with the

knowledge that they may be selectively ethical. The ‘cynical and disinterested’ consumer suffers not only from a lack of information, but lack conviction that companies are truly ethical. It is doubted however that even if they were convinced, they would choose to change their purchasing behaviour. Such consumers would only buy ethically if it did not detract from their value and brand choice and involved no inconvenience. The ‘confused and uncertain’ consumer would like to shop ethically but lacks guidance and is baffled by the contradictory messages about corporate ethical behaviour. It is unknown whether the ‘oblivious’ consumer would or would not shop ethically and their lack of knowledge about the issues mean that it has not become a factor in their purchasing decision making.

There has also been a sense of impotence demonstrated by some consumers about whether or not their actions could make a difference, which has been linked to the likelihood in them participating in ethical purchasing acts or boycotts. For some consumers, their belief that they alone could not make a difference has thwarted their intention to purchase ethically. However, if consumers felt they could make a difference, their behaviour would be less dependent on how others behaved (Carrigan, Szmigin & Wright, 2004). Other research has found that in order for a consumer to care, there had to be a direct link that personally affected them before they would be prompted into ethical purchase behaviour. Perhaps a key factor from Boulstridge and Carrigan’s (2000) study was the importance of ethical/unethical behaviour that directly impacted on the consumers themselves. The level of interest that the respondents showed towards corporate activity was characterised by what would directly impact on them. Therefore, if unethical behaviour negatively affected the consumer, then they would be interested and take action. It may be that ethics only matter to consumers if they have a vested personal interest in them, and that they would be personally positively or negatively affected by the behaviour. It was also clear that consumers had little specific knowledge about individual companies, but rather viewed ethics on a macro basis.

Without any clear differentiation perceived between and among companies, consumers have had little on which to make their judgements.

2.8 A brand's influence on purchasing behaviour

2.8.1 Brand management

The American Marketing Association (Kotler, 2000: 404) defines a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." In selling a branded product or service, there is a promise on behalf of the company to deliver a specific attribute associated with a specific brand. This would include the physical product and its benefits as well as the value of associating with the particular brand.

According to Aaker (1997) brand equity is related to the degree to which brands are preferred over another. Strong brand association is not only about the perception of the quality of the brand but also the emotional connection an individual has towards the brand. Having high brand loyalty is considered from when a customer is satisfied with the product or service and would incur costs by changing brand, to when a devoted customer would only purchase a specific brand and do whatever was necessary to obtain that brand. This definition can also be associated to that of brand preference.

From a customer-based perspective, Keller (1993) defined brand equity as the differential effects that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand. Brand knowledge is in terms of an associative network model, a network of nodes and links where the brand node memory has a variety of associations or a simple unique association linked to it.

There are many theories about how and why consumers buy specific brands. The consumer could be limited by economic resources and by their ability to look and store information about a brand. When consumers are looking for information about brands they are generally constrained by factors such as time pressure and previous experience. The two most important factors though, according to De Chernatony & McDonald (1998), are the extent of the involvement of the consumer in the purchase and their perception of the differences between various brands. Depending on the combination of these two factors, Chernatony & McDonald (1998) were able to categorise the different decision processes, which are illustrated in Figure 3. This model was initially adapted from Assael (1987)

Figure 3: Typography of consumer decision process

Significantly perceived brand differences	Extended problem solving	Tendency to limited problem solving
Minor perceived brand differences	Dissonance reduction	Limited problem solving
	High consumer involvement	**Low consumer involvement**

Source: De Chernatony & McDonald (1998), adapted from Assael, (1987)

Aaker (1991) asserted that the underlying value of a brand name often is the set of associations, ie what its meaning is to consumers. Associations represent the basis for purchase decisions and for brand loyalty and they come in all forms and may reflect characteristics of the product or aspects independent of the product itself. Keller (1993) pointed out that the favourability, strength and uniqueness of brand associations are the dimensions distinguishing brand knowledge that play an

important role in determining the differential response that makes up brand equity, especially in high involvement decision making.

Regardless of the buying context, consumers exhibited uncertainty regarding their match between their choices of products or brands and their buying goal, as well as the unfavourable consequences they might face if a mismatch occured. This uncertainty represented major elements of consumers' perceived risk involved in the purchasing decision process (Cunningham, 1967). In order to reduce these perceived risks, consumers used several strategies, such as brand loyalty or store image to either confirm their decision or reduce their uncertainty about the decision.

Compared to three of Aaker's (1991) main characteristics which are linked to brand namely, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality, Chen (2001) believed that brand association was the core asset for building strong brand equity. His reasons were, firstly while brand awareness is a necessary characteristic, it is not sufficient for building strong brand equity. For example, a brand could be well known because it has a bad quality. Secondly, perceived quality and a well-known name might provide reasons to purchase a product, which should result in brand loyalty. However brand loyalty can sometimes be excluded from the conceptualisation of brand equity, because consumers may out of habit purchase a particular brand without really thinking much about why they have purchased it (Keller, 1993).

Keller & Aaker (1995) conducted an experiment to explore the impact of corporate image on the consumer acceptance of brand extension. Four different corporate images (innovation, environmental consciousness, community mindedness or neutrality) were created for companies given neutral names. The results indicated that innovation was the only corporate image dimension that enhanced the

perceived fit of a corporate brand extension and the evaluation of the product attributes. Moreover an innovative corporate image had a substantial positive impact upon corporate credibility, making the company appear to be more attractive and trustworthy.

Previous research has observed that brand name is one of the most important variables, which is not related to the products physical or functional aspects, that consumers used to evaluate products (Richardson & Dick, 2004). A study conducted by Dewar and Parker (1994) found that brand name was the most important signal across cultures when consumers faced uncertainty about a product or service. Important marketing factors, such as quality, price and purchase intention have been examined within different brand-related contexts (Grewal, Monroe & Krishnan, 1998) and research has shown that brand name helped consumers reduce search costs when making product evaluations and could reduce their perception of risk about product quality. Previous studies showed that consumers had a higher purchase probability for a well respected brand than for a less respected brand because awareness of the brand name could significantly reduce the perceived risk (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Other research suggested that consumers could become emotionally attached to consumption objects, including brands, which ultimately affected their decision-making patterns. Depending on the strength of the emotional attachment to the brand, variables such as price and CSR might become secondary in their decision to purchase a product or service (Thompson, MacInnis, Whan Park, 2005). Chen (2001) found little or no importance for CSR among respondents to his study based on brand association and free association and he concluded that consumers were unimpressed or unconcerned with the ‘good works’ done by a company. While it doesn’t give companies *carte blanche* for unethical behaviour, it does question the

branding value of CSR and if CSR doesn't generate brand associations then it makes no sense as part of a brand strategy.

2.8.2 Cause related marketing

Cause related marketing is defined by Pringle & Thompson (1999: 24) as an "activity by which a company with an image, product or service to market builds a relationship or partnership with a 'cause' or a number of 'causes' for mutual benefit."

Social responsibility in marketing covers a diverse range of issues such as consumerism, environmentalism, regulation, political and social marketing. Kotler (1972) was a key founder of the societal marketing movement who recognised that what consumers' desired may not necessarily be good for them, for example tobacco, and although marketers may create a happy customer in the short-term, in the long run both consumer and society may suffer as a direct result. It can be argued then that marketing becomes unhinged from its position of contributing to the apparent good life and becomes guilty of contributing to the destructive and wasteful side of a consumerist society. This conflict within marketing had given rise to scholarly debate surrounding societal marketing and marketing ethics, and the rise of the activist school of marketing, representing empirical research and conceptual thinking associated with cause related marketing, in particular consumer welfare and consumer satisfaction (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

According to Hurd (2003), cause related marketing can be used to promote a trusted brand giving the product such values as quality and humanity, however consumers are quick to spot those campaigns that are not genuine and this should be borne in mind by the marketers. Companies invest much time, effort and money promoting their brands but not much on promoting the reputation of their company. Once a brand is 'trusted' by the consumer, a company can use this trust as an invaluable asset in their campaigns for social causes. Using brands to promote a

company's CSR activities and thereby enhancing the company's reputation, tackles the problem of the consumer's apparent lack of information about a company's social causes (Hilton, 2003).

CSR can also be used to differentiate products and thus be marketed as such. Production processes within the company, for example pesticide-free fruit or organic fertilizer, can differentiate a brand and, therefore, according to Jensen (1988), companies can justify their investment in CSR through this type of product enhancement, which would facilitate the quest for profit maximisation.

Richards (1995) highlighted the fact that markets had become fairly stagnant and linking a brand with a good cause could give a company a competitive edge. She further emphasised that companies must use this type of marketing carefully as consumers can become cynical when they do not associate the values of the brand with the cause in question. Laczniak (1993) stated that as the field of marketing develops a stronger ethical profile, marketers would find it harder to ignore the ethical gap between what society expects and what marketers are delivering. In order to develop a worthy cause-related marketing campaign, Miller (2002) believed that visible employee involvement and executive commitment was essential to ensure the desired consumer loyalty would be achieved.

Despite the work in the field over the last thirty to forty years, there appears to still be no definitive answer to the question of exactly what is the social responsibility of marketing. One of the reasons for this may lie in the difficulty in deciding which stakeholder interests should take priority, and who should make the final decision if conflict exists between those stakeholders' interests. The debate over pharmaceutical drug pricing resulted in the engagement of the South African national government and drug marketers in litigation. Arguments were made by government on ethical grounds to allow access to cheaper drugs for consumers

but the pharmaceutical companies defended their pricing policies based on the consideration of their other stakeholders such as shareholders and employees (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). The stakeholder aspect of cause related marketing is a complicating factor for those trying to achieve clear ethical judgements as it can be difficult to make a consistent ethical judgement that achieves equal ‘good’ and at the same time avoids harming stakeholder interest.

In summary, most experts agree that using CSR in cause related marketing would have an impact on consumer behaviour, if implemented correctly. Organisations, which ignore the development of ethical consumerism and its potential growth are taking the risk of losing market share, as customers move towards brands with an ethical marketing dimension. Those who respond quickly should be in a position to gain strategic competitive advantage, through the targeting of the new and developing ethical consumer market segment.

2.9 The influence of price and quality on decision making

Consumers often rely heavily on price as a predictor of quality and typically overestimate the strength of this relation. Furthermore, the implication of quality they make on the basis of price could influence their actual purchasing decisions. Selective hypothesis testing appears to underlie the effects on information load and format on price-quality inferences. Results of five experiments concluded that quality inferences were more heavily influenced by price when individuals had a high need for cognitive closure, when the amount of information was high, and when the information presented was rank ordered in terms of quality rather than presented randomly. Furthermore, because consumers were willing to purchase more expensive brands when they perceived a high price-quality correlation, these variables could also influence their purchase decisions (Cronley, Prosavac, Meyer, Kardes & Kellaris, 2005).

Yechiam, Erev & Gopher (2001) discovered that when consumers were faced with a new product, promoted through cause related marketing, they initially believed that its quality was high. This belief led to an initial purchase and experimentation with the product and if the quality was found to be low, then consumers, over time, would change their beliefs about products marketed through cause related marketing. As a result, the long-term effect of cause related marketing is expected to depend on the quality of the product. A consumer survey revealed that the majority of respondents who purchased fairly traded products perceived them to be of high quality and the criterion used, was the comparison between fair trade products and the equivalent branded product. Thirty five percent of the respondents perceived them to be of better quality than branded products and 45% thought they were of the same quality. Only 5% thought them to be of an inferior quality.

Boulstridge & Carrigan (2000) found that price was important to older consumers, but less important than previous research had suggested. Despite the impression that older people had less disposable income, a study found that they were willing to pay a higher price in certain circumstances. This would suggest that if older consumers perceived value in a product or service, be it ethical or some other form, then they were willing to pay a higher price. They were however not convinced by the argument that ethics need be more expensive and had a threshold of how much more they were willing to pay. This corresponded with work by Folkes & Kamins (1999) who suggested that responsible corporate behaviour, price and quality are complementary and not mutually exclusive buyer influences and consumers were not willing to purchase ethically if price and quality were significantly affected.

A consumer’s behaviour towards a company’s ethics could be reflected by what price they were willing to pay. The price that consumers were willing to pay for a

company's products was one way they could signal their approval or disapproval of a company's behaviour. Thus, consumers might punish unethical behaviour by only willing to pay less for a product compared to a product by a company that had engaged in ethical behaviour (Creyer & Ross, 1997).

2.10 CSR in the South African environment

South Africa can be seen as a multi-cultural environment, where a diverse range of beliefs co-exists in a state of dynamic tension and Mabaso (1995) revealed that a profound shift in traditional cultural values is evident in the belief system of South Africa's urban black youth. International media introduced new cultural stimuli, which has often conflicted with traditional values.

Singhapakdi & Karende (1999) suggested that consumers from different cultures had different views on ethical issues. What may be considered ethical business practice in one culture might be seen as unethical in another. They also stated that a range of factors including cultural and economic differences, the political environment and even gender were likely to influence an individual's ethical stance and concluded that ethical issues were perceived to be less important by marketers in developing countries (including South Africa) than developed countries such as the USA and Australia.

Culture influences behaviour through its manifestations namely, values, heroes, rituals and symbols. These are forms in which culturally determined knowledge is stored and expressed. Each cultural group therefore possesses different cultural manifestations (Hofstede, 1997). South Africa's diverse cultural beliefs may result in distinctive ethical market segments based on specific cultural issues. Alternatively there may be a general South African concern shared by ethical consumers, irrespective of their diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.11 Conclusion

It has been difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the merit of CSR, and the demerits of unethical behaviour given the contradictory research evidence presented. Consumers seem to need more information to allow them to make better ethical judgements and there is a role for companies to communicate this through the media and other methods. Equally consumers need to be able to more easily compare and contrast the ethical behaviour of different companies and their products, if ethical values are to become a part of their purchasing decision. There also seems to be an issue concerning ethical integrity and consumer scepticism surrounding corporate ethics. Consumers who act on ethical intentions and seek out information on CSR do exist, but appear to be a minority.

Overall the value of CSR remains uncertain for three main reasons. Firstly, there is very limited evidence that consumers are willing to give their support, through either repeat purchases or word of mouth, to socially responsible companies. Secondly, little is known about consumers' definition of socially responsible corporate behaviours. Lastly, corporate social responsibilities have predominantly been investigated in the USA and UK, hence the appropriateness of these studies as a method to understand the consumers motivation for purchasing products and services in other countries, especially developing countries, remains uncertain.

2.12 Research questions

2.12.1 Research question 1

How critical is CSR to consumers when making a purchasing decision?

According to Strong (1996), preliminary research carried out among large UK retailers revealed that five out of eight organisations considered ethical

consumerism when making purchasing decisions. However Carrigan & Attalla (2001) found that although consumers had a desire to support ethical companies, their actual purchase behaviour often remained unaffected by CSR initiatives and consumers were unwilling to undergo any inconvenience to purchase ethically. Although consumers had socially responsible attitudes, in Boulstridge & Carrigan's (2000) study, only 20 per cent had actually purchased something because the product was associated with a good cause and concluded that although consumers expressed a willingness to make ethical purchases, the reality is that CSR was not the most dominant criterion in the their purchasing decision.

2.12.2 Research question 2

What is the relative importance of the CSR attribute in the decision making process versus brand, quality and price?

McWilliams & Siegel (2001) found that consumers who value CSR were willing to pay higher prices for a product with CSR characteristics than one without those characteristics. Strong (1996) also established that 39% of respondents would make a trial purchase of a fairly traded product regardless of the price of the product and Creyer (1997) noted that consumers wouldl reward ethical behaviour by being willing to pay higher prices for that company's product and lower prices from an unethical company. In contrast, Carrigan & Attalla (2001) concluded that price, quality and value outweighed ethical criteria in the consumers purchase behaviour and consumers were not willing to sacrifice quality for CSR.

2.12.3 Research question 3

What are the CSR initiatives that are considered important for consumers when deciding to purchase a product?

It was noted by Carrigan & Attala (2001) that the youth were more sympathetic to animal rather than human causes. McWilliams & Siegel's (2001) study determined that the type of CSR a company undertook was important, for example, the rainforest and poor working conditions were not important whereas animal rights issues were significant and the majority of the group stated they would change brands if they knew animals, especially dolphins, were being harmed.

Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) noted that consumers' personal support of a particular type of CSR appeared to be a key determinant of their sensitivity to a company's CSR efforts and that marketers should research a variety of CSR initiatives and select those that enjoy the highest and most wide-spread support of its target market.

3 METHODOLOGY

It was the intention of the researcher to determine whether CSR initiatives influence consumer behaviour. In order to achieve the required results, quantitative research will be undertaken.

3.1 Method of data collection

As the intention was to measure the trade off that a consumer will make in choosing a product with CSR attributes, against brand, price and quality, the methodology to be utilised will be conjoint analysis.

Conjoint analysis is a research technique used to measure the relative importance of one attribute to another and can also used to predict their choices for future products, with the desired attribute. While a simple question can merely be posed to a consumer, requesting them to select the most important attribute of a product, they would, in most cases, indicate that all would be important. By using the qualitative measure of conjoint analysis, the consumer is asked to make a trade-off judgement and it is possible to therefore statistically determine which attributes they would be willing to sacrifice for another (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 1995).

One of the problems encountered is that often preferences for attributes may be in conflict, or there are insufficient resources to satisfy all the preferences and the need is to attempt to find a compromise among the measured attributes. Aaker, Kumar & Day (1995: 643) recommended that the consumer be given “descriptions of concepts that represent the possible combinations of levels of attributes.” The idea is that each choice reveals something about the relative importance, or utility, of each attribute. Each concept is evaluated in terms of overall liking, or as a preference to another attribute.

Conjoint analysis has been developed into three main approaches:

- Adaptive conjoint analysis (ACA)
- Traditional conjoint value analysis (CVA)
- Choice based conjoint analysis (CBC)

The most popular method, and the method selected for this research, is the choice based conjoint analysis as it closely resembles the decision process customers make in the marketplace. Potential offers are prepared defining a combination of different attributes with the respondent being requested to select their preference. As this type of research mimics real behaviour, it improves the validity of the results.

Another advantage of CBC is that it allows the respondent the opportunity of not selecting an option, therefore being indifferent. This again mimics reality as customers have the option of not purchasing and walking away. The model allows for this response and accounts for it in the calculation of utilities. This method makes it easier to calculate attribute interactions like price and brand.

The first step in conjoint analysis involves the selection of the attributes to be used. These stem from the purpose of the research, namely to determine whether the attribute of a product which encompasses CSR, is relatively more or less important that the attributes of brand, price and quality.

3.2 Selection of the field of experiment

In order to obtain as objective a result as possible, one product was used in the field of experiment. The choice of the product was based on an item where a selection of CSR attributes can be realistically allotted. The product is a commonly

purchased item, used by the majority of the population and historically has had little noted about its CSR properties.

Various combinations of the products' attributes relating to brand, quality, price and CSR initiatives were presented to the respondents in order to allow them to make their preferred choice and therefore substantiating which attribute is most important to them.

The product chosen was household soap that can be purchased at most South African general retail outlets. The CSR attributes are based on whether animal testing is conducted on the product and if so, the conditions of the animals in the process. The quality attributes are based on the ingredients added to the soaps, to create perceptions of quality.

Four well-known soap brands were used for the brand attributes and various cost ranges cover the price attributes.

Product - Household soap

CSR attributes	Products are NOT tested on animals	Only a small portion of product tested on animals and acceptable standards of care are adhered to	Modified animal-based testing done, which minimises pain and distress	Products are tested on animals despite alternatives being available
Brand attributes	Dove	Colgate-Palmolive	Lux	Sunlight
Quality attributes	Moisturising properties	Glycerine free	Hypoallergenic	Uses aromatherapy oils
Pricing attributes	R1.20	R2.75	R3.99	R5.45

3.3 The research population

The population consists of all members of society who are in a position to purchase goods and services. The population is limited to the consumers in South Africa based on the limitations of the study.

3.3.1 Sample size and selection and methodology

The researcher targeted consumers who would make the decision whether to purchase the selected products or not. The target sample size was aimed at between 100 and 200 respondents to attempt to obtain sufficient data to generate as accurate a result as possible. The researcher attempted to target a diverse population to avoid the possibility of a bias result, which might occur in one specific sector of the market.

3.3.2 Data collection

There are two methods for collecting conjoint analysis, namely the trade-off approach and the full-profile approach. As the trade-off approach, a matrix requiring respondents to rank combinations of two attributes is time consuming and tedious during preparation and during the data collection process, the full-profile approach will be used in the research. The full-profile approach involves giving respondents two possible product configurations and requesting them to rank their preference.

The measuring instrument consisted of a questionnaire comprising of the following sections:

a. The first section contained questions designed to determine the demographics of the sample population. This would assist in determining whether there is a relation between the results and demographic characteristics.
b. The second section was designed to allow the respondents to indicate their preferred combination of attributes. This is designed to record the result of the conjoint analysis experiment.
c. The final section made use of an order ranking scale to rank eight types of CSR initiatives in order of importance.

The objective of the quantitative research was to establish whether a relationship can be established between CSR products and the consumer's decision to purchase those products. A secondary objective was to determine whether specific causes are more prevalent than others.
The questionnaire was emailed to the majority respondents with the request that they complete and return to the researcher within a specified period of time or

preferably completed in person by the researcher. In order to ensure confidentiality only the researcher received the responses.

3.4 Reliability and validity

3.4.1 External validity

The accuracy of the study was determined by the representativeness of the sample to the population. Although no testing was conducted to verify the sample is representative of the population, every effort was made to identify a random sample. The attempt to obtain a wide market segment of respondents added to the balance and validity of the research. Although the majority of the questionnaires were emailed, where email was not available to a certain segment of the population, those questionnaires were conducted on a one-on-one basis, to ensure the broader base of the population was covered.

3.4.2 Internal validity

Every attempt was made to ensure the questionnaire was prepared in a manner to limit interpretation. The questions were posed so that they were as clear and concise as possible as well as very specific.

In order to validate the questionnaire, the researcher made use of a pilot test to ensure that the statements were objective. The pilot respondents were requested to state their reasoning for the rating and these respondents were also be requested to determine if further or alterative classifications should be used in respect of the data required.

3.4.3 Reliability

The questionnaire was constructed in such a manner as to try and keep the attention of the respondent at all times. It only consisted of as few pages as

possible, and should have been easily understood. This should have prevented any respondents not completing the survey or completing it without consideration for the topic.

3.4.4 The Pilot test

In order to assist with the validity and reliability of a measurement instrument, Leedy & Ormond (2001) recommended the use of a pilot test.
This test acted as a trial run and was aimed at identifying any ambiguities and ensured the survey was structured in such a way that the language was clear and topic understood.

Refer to Appendix A, for the questionnaire sent to the respondents.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the field. The interpretation of the data will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.2 Demographics

In order to document the number of respondent's questionnaires that were used in the analysis, the number of questionnaires received, based on the respondents age group, is reflected in Table 2. A total of 100 responses were received of which two were disregarded. The disregarded responses were as a result of incomplete questionnaires. All respondents were given equal weightings.

Table 2: The number of respondents per age group

Age of Respondents	Number of Respondents
18 - 24	13
25 - 30	21
31 - 35	26
36 - 40	19
> 40	21
Sub Total	100
Less disregarded responses	-2
Total number of respondents	**98**

The following graphically illustrates the demographic breakdown of the respondents according to age, income, gender and race based on the information supplied on the questionnaire.

Figure 4: Breakdown of respondents according to age

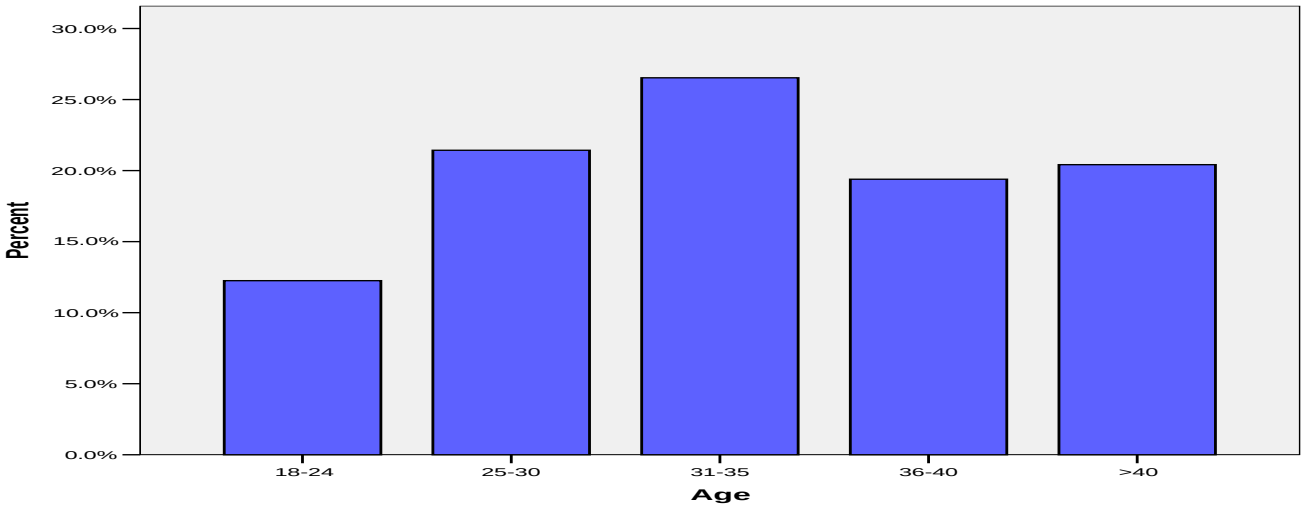


Figure 4 provides the breakdown of respondents according to the age groups provided in the questionnaire.

Figure 5: Breakdown of respondents according to income

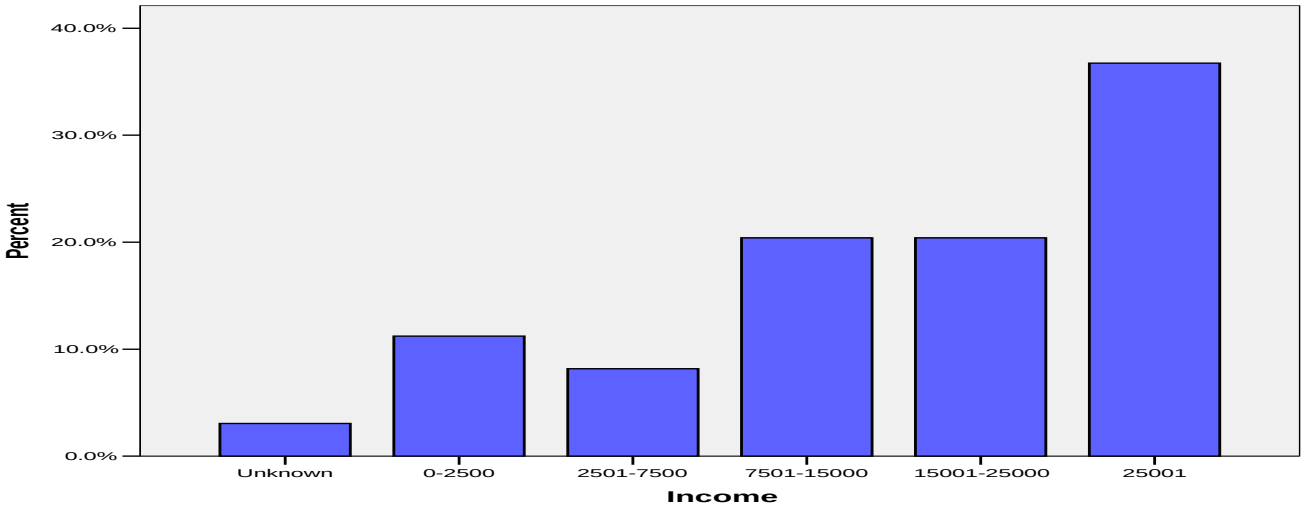


Figure 5 reflects the various income groups among the respondents.

Figure 6: Breakdown of respondents according to gender

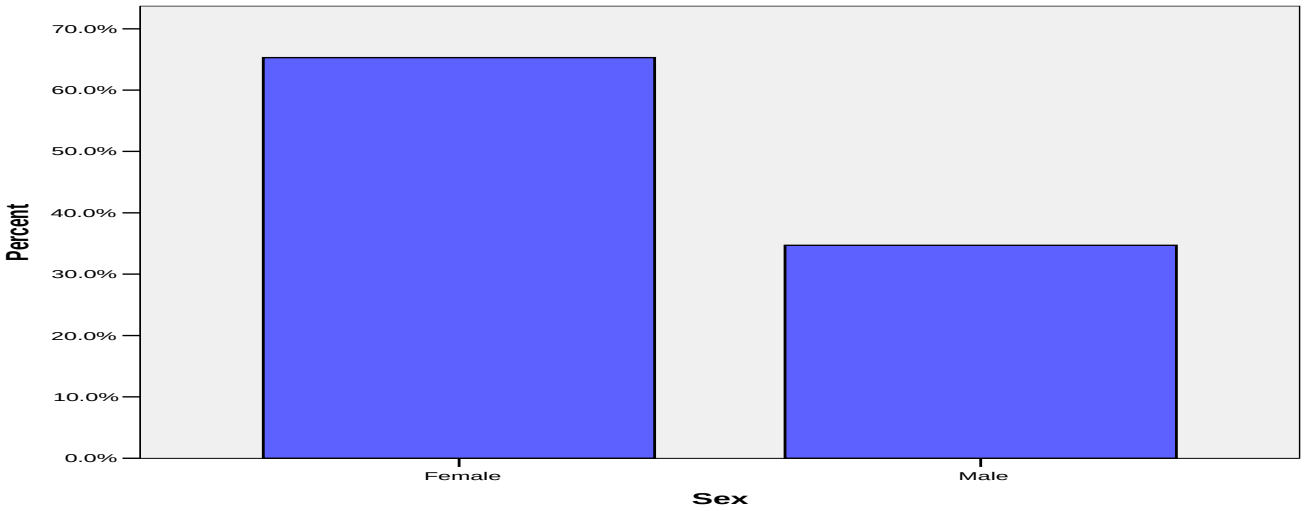


Figure 6 illustrates the breakdown of respondents according to gender.

Figure 7: Breakdown of respondents according to race

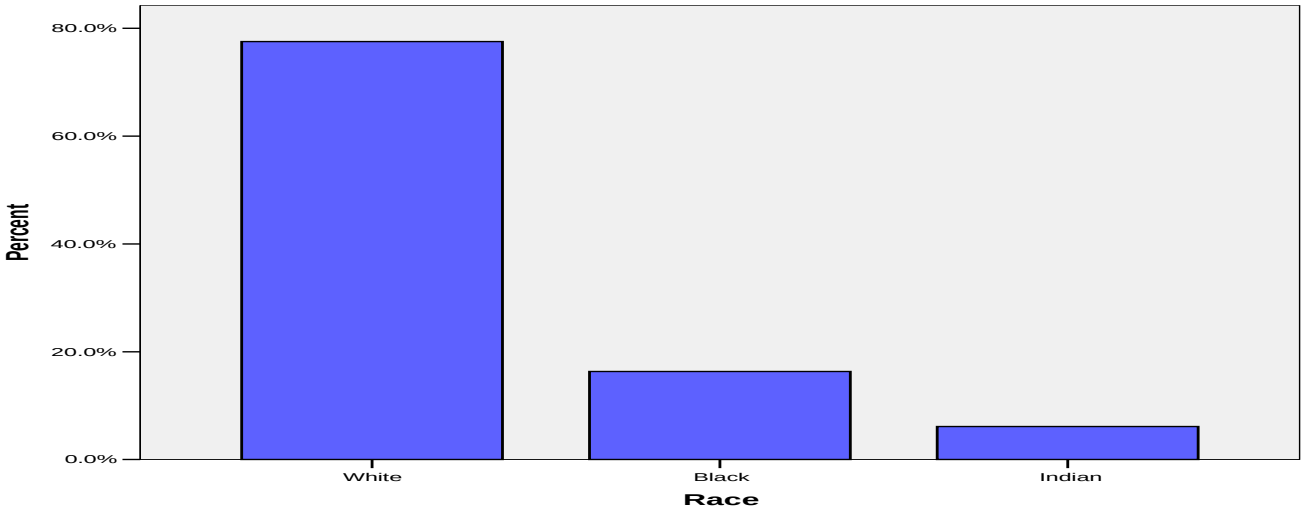


Figure 7 provides the breakdown of the respondents according to their race. Only white, black and indian representation was obtained.

4.3 Relative importance of attributes

The study involved an analysis of consumer preference for a soap based on characteristics of that soap, referred to as attributes, and the values of those attributes, referred to as levels. In this case, an example of an attribute was the brand, and an example of a level of that attribute was sunlight soap. The method of testing was conjoint analysis. Two measures are derived from the conjoint analysis, the conjoint utilities and the conjoint importances. The conjoint utilities are quantitative measures of preference that focus on the levels, whereas the conjoint importances are quantitative measures of preference for the actual attributes.

Conjoint utilities are numerical measures of the value that each respondent places on each level of the attributes, in this case CSR, brand, price and quality. The conjoint importances of an attribute are derived from the conjoint utilities, and are calculated as the difference between the utilities of the least preferred and most preferred levels of an attribute. This range is taken as a measure of the maximum contribution that an attribute can make to the respondents preference for that product. The relative importance of an attribute is found by dividing its importance by the total importance of all the attributes, expressed as a percentage.

The utilities of the different levels of attributes are tabled with the average utilities for each level recorded separately, whereafter the combined relative importances are given.

4.3.1 Corporate social responsibility

Table 3: The average utilities of the levels of CSR

Level of CSR	Products are NOT tested on animals	Only a small portion of product tested on animals and acceptable standards of care are adhered to	Modified animal-based testing done, which minimises pain and distress	Products are tested on animals despite alternatives being available
Ranking	1	3	2	4
Utility	83.44554429	-13.86975622	2.809083571	-72.38487153

From the above we see that the most preferred level of CSR was when the product was not tested on animals with the least preferred level being where the product was tested on animals despite alternatives being available.

4.3.2 Brand

Table 4: The average utilities of the levels of brand

Brand	Dove	Colgate-Palmolive	Lux	Sunlight
Ranking	1	3	2	4
Utility	23.55261	-3.191675	3.1115814	-23.472516

Dove soap was the most preferred brand, with Sunlight soap being the least preferred brand.

4.3.3 Quality

Table 5: The average utilities of the levels of quality

Level of Quality	Moisturising	Glycerine free	Hypoallergenic	Uses aromatherapy oils
Ranking	3	4	1	2
Utility	-2.4881141	-6.8274946	10.80895765	-1.493351

The most preferred level of quality was hypoallergenic with the least preferred being glycerine free.

4.3.4 Price

Table 6: The average utilities of the levels of price

Price	R1.20	R2.75	R3.99	R5.45
Ranking	2	1	3	4
Utility	5.9160232	6.589744	-0.089943	-12.415823

The second cheapest price had the highest average utility, with the highest price, the lowest.

4.3.5 Combined view

The averages of the relative conjoint importances for each attribute are illustrated below and show that, based on this sample, the attribute which would contribute most to the respondents' preference for the product is CSR, followed by brand and then price and lastly quality.

Table 7: Relative importance of attributes (total)

CSR	**Brand**	**Quality**	**Price**
45.11%	23.17%	14.68%	17.04%

The raw data collected from the respondents as to their preferences are shown in Appendix B.

4.4 Importance of attributes in respect of demographics

The tables, which follow, present a summary of the mean importance of each of the attributes across the different demographic groups.

The means can also be compared between the attributes in the demographic groups to assess whether all the demographic groups share similar results with the total of the groups, ie the ranking of their means correspond with the ranking of the total means. In Table 8 the age group 25 – 30 is the anomaly whereby the ranking of their means do not correspond with the total means as this group found quality a more important attribute than price with respective means of 76 and 50.1. This indicates that this age group is less price-sensitive and is prepared to potentially pay a higher price for a product based on the quality thereof.

In Table 9, the income group 0 – R2 500 prefers brand (mean of 140) to CSR with a mean of 109.5, which again does not correspond with the total mean rankings for the attributes based on income. This shows that this income group cares less about the CSR aspect of a product and more about the significance of the brand.

Table 10 reflected no anomalies and the ranking of both the male and female means corresponded with the total means.

Table 11 exhibits the means based on race. The black population's mean ranking differ from that of the total, with brand (mean – 137.3) being the most important attribute, followed by price, CSR and finally quality with means of 101.1, 94.2 and 67.4 respectively. This confirms that CSR is not a priority to this population group which places a higher value on brand and price.

Table 8: The mean and standard deviations of the attributes based on age

Age		Importance - CSR	RI - CSR	Importance - Brand	RI - Brand	Importance - Quality	RI - Quality	Importance - Price	RI - Price
18-24	Mean	126.4739	.3162	119.7823	.2995	48.9066	.1223	104.8373	.2621
	Std. Deviation	106.17696	.26544	113.73691	.28434	23.42945	.05857	87.77371	.21943
25-30	Mean	178.6045	.4465	95.0215	.2376	75.9822	.1900	50.3918	.1260
	Std. Deviation	101.15119	.25288	78.13443	.19534	56.84841	.14212	28.79421	.07199
31-35	Mean	204.6498	.5116	81.5232	.2038	52.0653	.1302	61.7617	.1544
	Std. Deviation	93.00314	.23251	87.33562	.21834	21.35798	.05339	38.81735	.09704
36-40	Mean	203.7187	.5093	81.3264	.2033	55.6200	.1390	59.3349	.1483
	Std. Deviation	78.06280	.19516	59.77443	.14944	23.70553	.05926	45.11421	.11279
>40	Mean	161.0910	.4027	99.3236	.2483	58.1020	.1453	81.4833	.2037
	Std. Deviation	114.92707	.28732	89.57537	.22394	48.13835	.12035	66.48645	.16622
Total	Mean	180.4260	.4511	92.6951	.2317	58.7247	.1468	68.1542	.1704
	Std. Deviation	100.18366	.25046	84.17870	.21045	38.66003	.09665	54.53542	.13634

RI – Relative Importance

Table 9: The mean and standard deviations of the attributes based on income

Income		Importance - CSR	RI - CSR	Importance - Brand	RI - Brand	Importance - Quality	RI - Quality	Importance - Price	RI - Price
Unknown	Mean	85.0670	.2127	124.3269	.3108	116.3180	.2908	74.2882	.1857
	Std. Deviation	52.20063	.13050	102.03365	.25508	57.84855	.14462	36.98569	.09246
0-2500	Mean	109.5105	.2738	140.0628	.3502	73.0695	.1827	77.3573	.1934
	Std. Deviation	91.43894	.22860	110.68256	.27671	64.11177	.16028	68.29633	.17074
2501-7500	Mean	194.1064	.4853	67.4499	.1686	47.7903	.1195	90.6534	.2266
	Std. Deviation	103.97728	.25994	49.94053	.12485	20.29248	.05073	82.60312	.20651
7501-15000	Mean	185.6964	.4642	86.0599	.2151	63.7187	.1593	64.5250	.1613
	Std. Deviation	103.04564	.25761	82.70249	.20676	30.49569	.07624	42.88932	.10722
15001-25000	Mean	211.5753	.5289	72.8387	.1821	47.6984	.1192	67.8876	.1697
	Std. Deviation	100.47295	.25118	69.72658	.17432	19.97159	.04993	68.76374	.17191
25001	Mean	186.7680	.4669	95.9132	.2398	55.3233	.1383	61.9955	.1550
	Std. Deviation	94.07749	.23519	86.57160	.21643	38.74143	.09685	41.34547	.10336
Total	Mean	180.4260	.4511	92.6951	.2317	58.7247	.1468	68.1542	.1704
	Std. Deviation	100.18366	.25046	84.17870	.21045	38.66003	.09665	54.53542	.13634

RI – Relative Importance

Table 10: The mean and standard deviations of the attributes based on gender

Gender		Importance - CSR	RI - CSR	Importance - Brand	RI - Brand	Importance - Quality	RI - Quality	Importance - Price	RI - Price
Female	Mean	199.6337	.4991	80.5607	.2014	55.9197	.1398	63.8859	.1597
	Std. Deviation	97.06114	.24265	73.94937	.18487	34.48171	.08620	53.35982	.13340
Male	Mean	144.2705	.3607	115.5362	.2888	64.0048	.1600	76.1885	.1905
	Std. Deviation	97.23362	.24308	97.80457	.24451	45.59981	.11400	56.60876	.14152
Total	Mean	180.4260	.4511	92.6951	.2317	58.7247	.1468	68.1542	.1704
	Std. Deviation	100.18366	.25046	84.17870	.21045	38.66003	.09665	54.53542	.13634

RI – Relative Importance

Table 11: The mean and standard deviations of the attributes based on race

Race		Importance - CSR	RI - CSR	Importance - Brand	RI - Brand	Importance - Quality	RI - Quality	Importance - Price	RI - Price
White	Mean	197.2196	.4930	84.4112	.2110	56.8025	.1420	61.5668	.1539
	Std. Deviation	98.46309	.24616	79.63459	.19909	36.14675	.09037	48.72163	.12180
Black	Mean	94.2352	.2356	137.2576	.3431	67.4191	.1685	101.0881	.2527
	Std. Deviation	68.19155	.17048	99.86218	.24966	54.25440	.13564	75.11978	.18780
Indian	Mean	197.5502	.4939	78.7910	.1970	59.8879	.1497	63.7710	.1594
	Std. Deviation	83.23039	.20808	69.26309	.17316	16.31232	.04078	31.75480	.07939
Total	Mean	180.4260	.4511	92.6951	.2317	58.7247	.1468	68.1542	.1704
	Std. Deviation	100.18366	.25046	84.17870	.21045	38.66003	.09665	54.53542	.13634

RI – Relative Importance

Tables 8 to 11 reflect the mean importances of the attributes across age, income, gender and race.

An ANOVA (analysis of variance) analysis was carried out to check if there is a statistically significant difference in mean importance across the demographics for any of the product attributes. The ANOVA tests for equality of mean between groups on a continuous dependent variable. In this case the dependent variables are importance and relative importance of the attributes. The aim was to test the null hypothesis that the dependent variable being tested for has an equal mean in all of its categories against the alternative hypothesis that one has a significantly different mean. The null hypothesis is rejected at the 5% significance level when the p-value (labelled Sig in the below tables) is less than 0.05, is less than 0.05. The test helps reflect which of the differences in mean importance are just by chance, and which ones are backed by statistical evidence (Miller, 1997). The results below show that there is a statistically significant difference in mean importance and mean relative importance for:

- Price across the age categories.
- Quality across the income categories
- CSR and brand across the gender categories
- CSR and price across the race categories

Table 12: ANOVA table in respect of age

			Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F - statistic	Sig.
Importance - CSR * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	68041.572	4	17010.393	1.747	.146
	Within Groups		905524.726	93	9736.825		
	Total		973566.297	97			
RI - CSR * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	.425	4	.106	1.747	.146
	Within Groups		5.660	93	.061		
	Total		6.085	97			
Importance - Brand * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	15497.844	4	3874.461	.536	.709
	Within Groups		671849.371	93	7224.187		
	Total		687347.215	97			
RI - Brand * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	.097	4	.024	.536	.709
	Within Groups		4.199	93	.045		
	Total		4.296	97			
Importance - Quality * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	8754.932	4	2188.733	1.494	.210
	Within Groups		136221.095	93	1464.743		
	Total		144976.028	97			
RI - Quality * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	.055	4	.014	1.494	.210
	Within Groups		.851	93	.009		
	Total		.906	97			
Importance – Price * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	28866.896	4	7216.724	2.585	**.042**
	Within Groups		259622.015	93	2791.635		
	Total		288488.910	97			
RI - Price * Age	Between Groups	(Combined)	.180	4	.045	2.585	**.042**
	Within Groups		1.623	93	.017		
	Total		1.803	97			

RI – Relative Importance

Table 12 calculates the significance level of the four attributes in respect of age. The relative importance of price is statistically significance with the p-value at less than 0.05. These are highlighted above.

Table 13: ANOVA table in respect of income

			Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F - statistic	Sig.
Importance - CSR * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	105505.522	5	21101.104	2.236	.057
	Within Groups		868060.776	92	9435.443		
	Total		973566.297	97			
RI - CSR * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	.659	5	.132	2.236	.057
	Within Groups		5.425	92	.059		
	Total		6.085	97			
Importance - Brand * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	41919.844	5	8383.969	1.195	.318
	Within Groups		645427.371	92	7015.515		
	Total		687347.215	97			
RI - Brand * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	.262	5	.052	1.195	.318
	Within Groups		4.034	92	.044		
	Total		4.296	97			
Importance - Quality * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	16517.804	5	3303.561	2.366	**.046**
	Within Groups		128458.224	92	1396.285		
	Total		144976.028	97			
RI - Quality * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	.103	5	.021	2.366	**.046**
	Within Groups		.803	92	.009		
	Total		.906	97			
Importance - Price * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	6724.565	5	1344.913	.439	.820
	Within Groups		281764.345	92	3062.656		
	Total		288488.910	97			
RI - Price * Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	.042	5	.008	.439	.820
	Within Groups		1.761	92	.019		
	Total		1.803	97			

RI – Relative Importance

Table 13 highlights the statistical significance of quality, ie a p-value of 0.046 in respect of income.

Table 14: ANOVA table in respect of gender

			Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F - statistic	Sig.
Importance - CSR * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	68057.327	1	68057.327	7.215	**.009**
	Within Groups		905508.970	96	9432.385		
	Total		973566.297	97			
RI - CSR * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.425	1	.425	7.215	**.009**
	Within Groups		5.659	96	.059		
	Total		6.085	97			
Importance - Brand * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	27161.896	1	27161.896	3.950	**.050**
	Within Groups		660185.319	96	6876.930		
	Total		687347.215	97			
RI - Brand * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.170	1	.170	3.950	**.050**
	Within Groups		4.126	96	.043		
	Total		4.296	97			
Importance - Quality * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	1451.463	1	1451.463	.971	.327
	Within Groups		143524.565	96	1495.048		
	Total		144976.028	97			
RI - Quality * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.009	1	.009	.971	.327
	Within Groups		.897	96	.009		
	Total		.906	97			
Importance - Price * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	3360.667	1	3360.667	1.132	.290
	Within Groups		285128.244	96	2970.086		
	Total		288488.910	97			
RI - Price * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.021	1	.021	1.132	.290
	Within Groups		1.782	96	.019		
	Total		1.803	97			

RI – Relative Importance

Two attributes, namely CSR and brand are found to be statistically significant with p-values of 0.009 and 0.050 respectively, as presented in Table 14.

Table 15: ANOVA table in respect of race

			Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F - statistic	Sig.
Importance - CSR * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	142054.97	2	71027.488	8.115	**.001**
	Within Groups		831511.32	95	8752.751		
	Total		973566.29	97			
RI - CSR * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	.888	2	.444	8.115	**.001**
	Within Groups		5.197	95	.055		
	Total		6.085	97			
Importance - Brand * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	38148.398	2	19074.199	2.791	.066
	Within Groups		649198.81	95	6833.672		
	Total		687347.21	97			
RI - Brand * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	.238	2	.119	2.791	.066
	Within Groups		4.057	95	.043		
	Total		4.296	97			
Importance - Quality * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	1498.409	2	749.205	.496	.610
	Within Groups		143477.61	95	1510.291		
	Total		144976.02	97			
RI - Quality * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	.009	2	.005	.496	.610
	Within Groups		.897	95	.009		
	Total		.906	97			
Importance - Price * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	20767.535	2	10383.767	3.685	**.029**
	Within Groups		267721.37	95	2818.120		
	Total		288488.91	97			
RI - Price * Race	Between Groups	(Combined)	.130	2	.065	3.685	**.029**
	Within Groups		1.673	95	.018		
	Total		1.803	97			

RI – Relative Importance

CSR with a p-value of 0.001 and price with a p-value of 0.29 proved to be statistically significant as shown in Table 15.

4.5 The relative importance of rank-order data

The means and standard deviations of the rankings given to the eight social causes were estimated using the shotgun stochastic search algorithm (Stacey, 2006) which is represented in Table 16. From this it is established that the respondents considered child welfare most important and sporting initiatives least important.

Table 16: Standardised mean rankings for the social causes

n	SSE	Animal rights	Child Welfare	Community based projects
1001	1.392477	0.8693	1.2668	0.0603

Environmental issues	HIV/Aids	Safer product enhancements	Sporting Initiatives	Unfair labour practice
0.4971	0.4077	0.24	-0.74	-0.142

5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter Four and is aligned with the research questions posed in Chapter Two.

5.2 Demographics

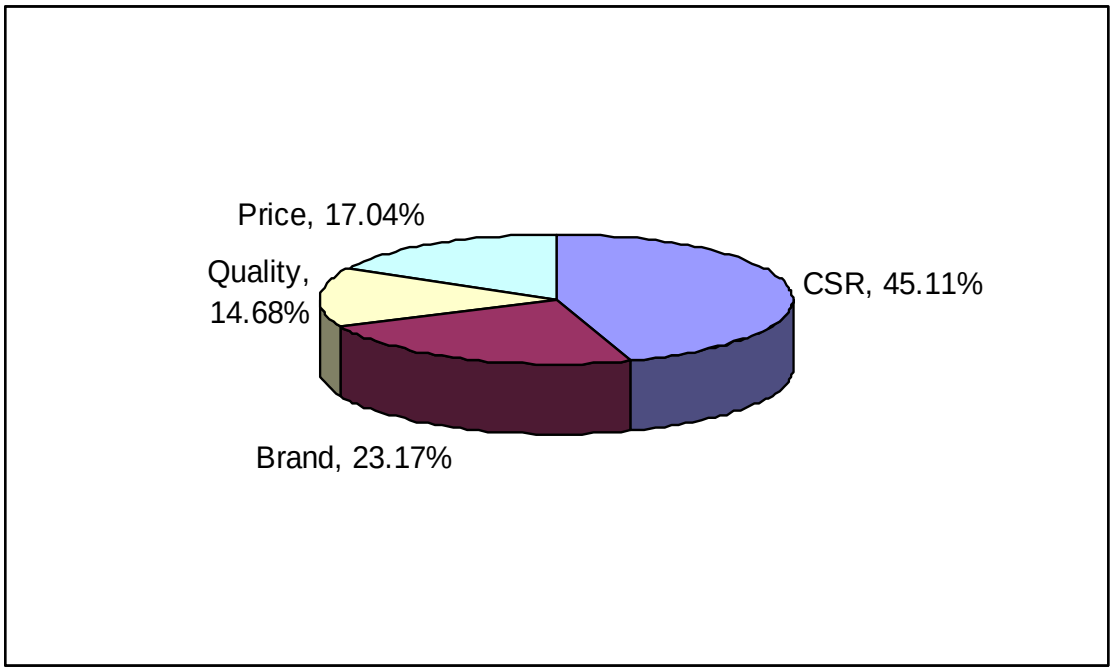
The breakdown of the demographic representation of the respondents is presented in Figures 4 to 7. The breakdown according to age shows a fairly even spread between the categories. The breakdown according to the income of the respondents reflects the majority are in the higher income bracket, which could have had an influence on the results as more affluent consumers might be willing to pay a higher price for a specific brand, superior quality or a CSR cause. The predominant gender was females and the reason for this is that females, in general, are the primary purchasers of soap and many male respondents who were requested to complete the document had little understanding of the product and in many cases chose to not complete the questionnaire. The breakdown of respondents according to race reflects that the majority were white with fairly little representation of black or indian respondents. This should be noted in that it could have had an influence on the outcome, based on potential cultural differences in perceptions about the importance CSR and the other attributes.

5.3 Corporate social responsibility

The results presented in Table 7 show that the attribute relating to CSR was considered the most important among the respondents. It accounted for 45.1% of the decisions made, almost twice that of the next highest attribute. Figure 8 illustrates the results graphically. The results confirm the literature by Richards (1995), that if a consumer is given the information about the CSR of a product and

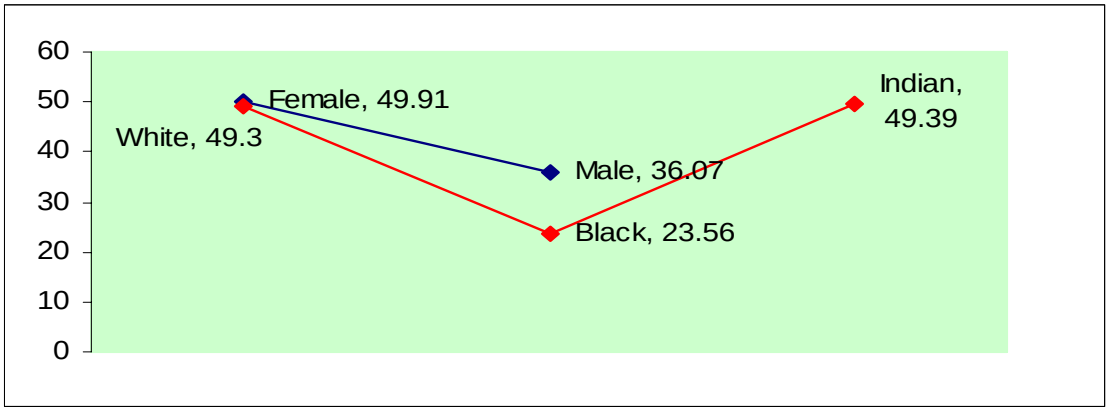
they believed in the cause associated therewith, then they would be willing to change the brand of product purchased.

Figure 8: Relative importance of attributes



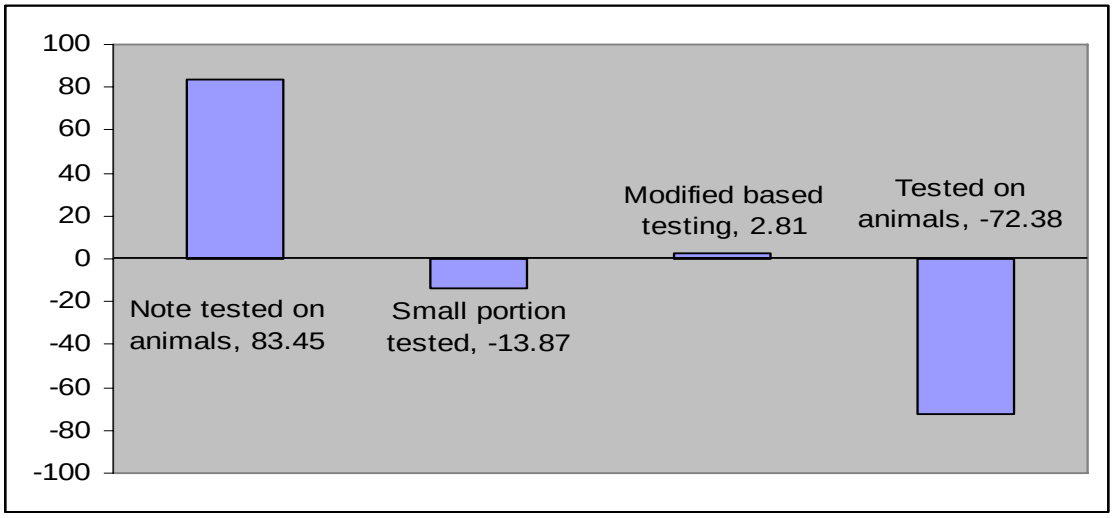
Tables 14 and 15 reflect that there is statistical significance between gender and CSR and race and CSR respectively. Referring to the means in Table 10 the mean importance for females is 199.6 and for males, 144.3, which can be interpreted by stating that CSR is considered a more important attribute for females than males. Table 11 shows that indians (mean - 197.6) and whites (mean 197.2) place a similar value on CSR while black people place significantly less value at a mean of 94.2. Figure 9 reflects both results graphically by showing the relative importance race and gender.

Figure 9: Relative importance of gender and race in respect of CSR



Within the levels of the CSR attribute, as presented in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 10, the preferred product, which was not tested on animals (utility of 83.45) far exceeded the product which was tested on animals, despite alternatives being available (utility of -72.38). The highest utility was also substantially higher than the second most preferred CSR level which was the modified based animal testing that had a utility of 2.81. This reflects the consumer's preference that a product not tested on animals far outweighs any type of testing, however small or controlled.

Figure 10: Utility levels for CSR



5.4 Brand

The respondents rated brand as the second highest attribute at an importance level of 23.17%. It was stated in the literature that what the consumers associate with a brand, ie high quality or low price could be used to determine whether a specific brand is purchased or not (Aaker, 1991). In this study, however, the presence of a CSR attribute outweighed any other association the respondent might have had with the brand and hence the substantial gap between these two importances. This result contradicts Chen (2001) in that it proves that knowing the CSR status of a product caused the respondents to switch brand when the CSR level was considered unsatisfactory.

Brand was however considered more important than the quality and price of the product, although the gap between brand and the third highest attribute, price was less than the difference between brand and CSR, confirming that these two attributes have a fairly close weighting in the eyes of the consumer. This confirms Aaker's (1997) view about brand associations and perceptions of quality.

Brand is also reflected in Table 14 as being statistically significant in respect of gender. The mean for males, as reflected in Table 10, was 115.5 and is considerably higher than that of females at a mean of 80.6. This indicates that males place a higher weighting on brand than females when making a product purchasing decision. Figure 11 reflects this difference, comparing the relative importance of brand between males and females.

Figure 11: Relative importance of gender in respect of brand

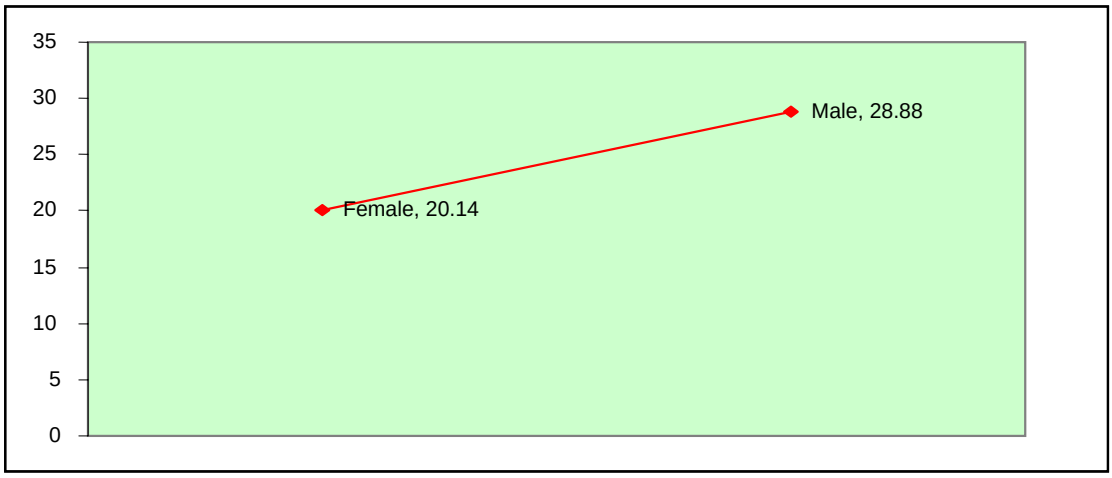
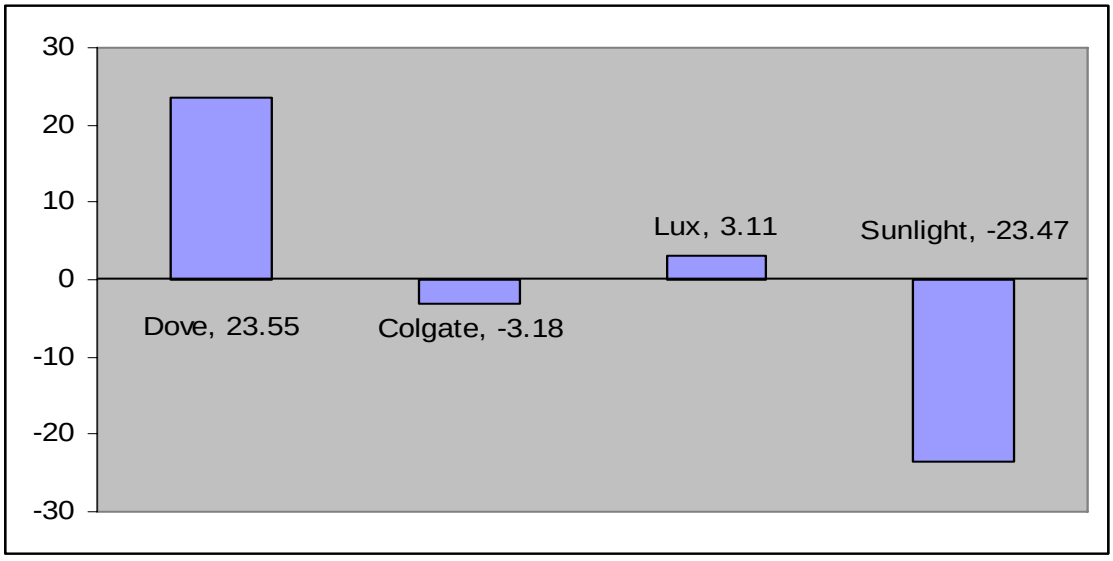


Table 4 reflects the results of the average utilities between the four types of brands presented to the respondents. Dove soap was by far the most popular brand of soap, followed by Lux, Colgate Palmolive and lastly Sunlight. This is graphically reflected in Figure 12. Sunlight and Colgate Palmolive showed negative utilities, reflecting the respondents' aversion for these brands.

Figure 12: Utility levels for Brand



5.5 Quality

The conjoint analysis results indicated clearly that the quality attribute of soap was the lowest ranked in terms of preference, which confirms that it was the least important factor in determining what soap the respondents chose.

A reason for the low ranking could be that quality can be defined as an intangible overall feeling about a brand. However, it is usually based on underlying dimensions, which include characteristics that consumers associate with brand (Aaker, 1991). Therefore the respondents could have confused their associations with one of the brands, with the levels of quality presented, rather seeing quality as an underlying dimension of the brand and therefore favouring the association of the brand over the quality presented.

There is a statistically significant difference in mean importance between quality and income as reflected in Table 13. While the unknown income can be ignored as it bears no relevance, the highest mean, as indicated in Table 9 is 73.1 for the R0 – R2 500 income range, which indicates that this income group values quality more than the other income groups. This is graphically depicted in Figure 13, which reflects the relative importance of quality for the different income groups.

Figure 13: Relative importance of income in respect of quality

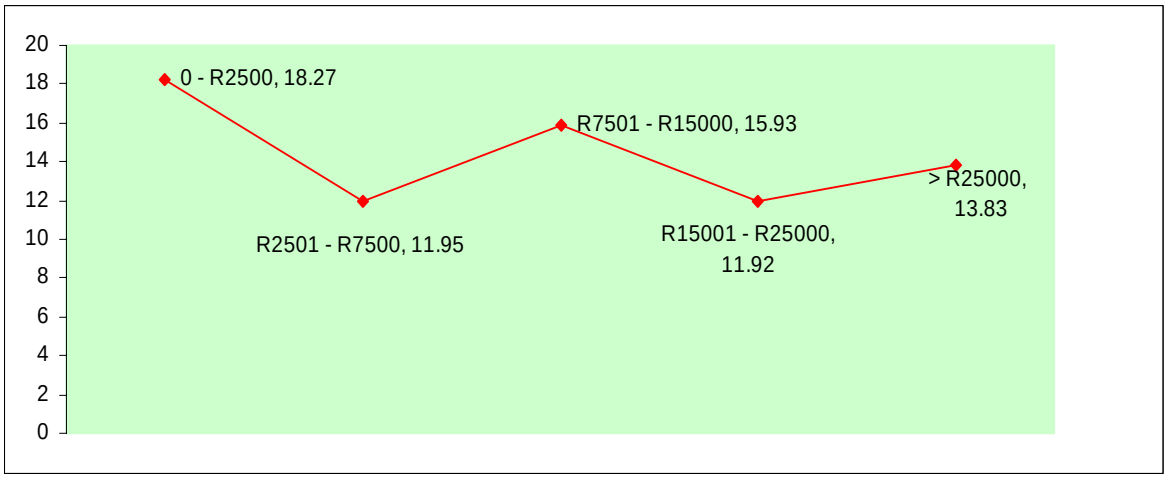
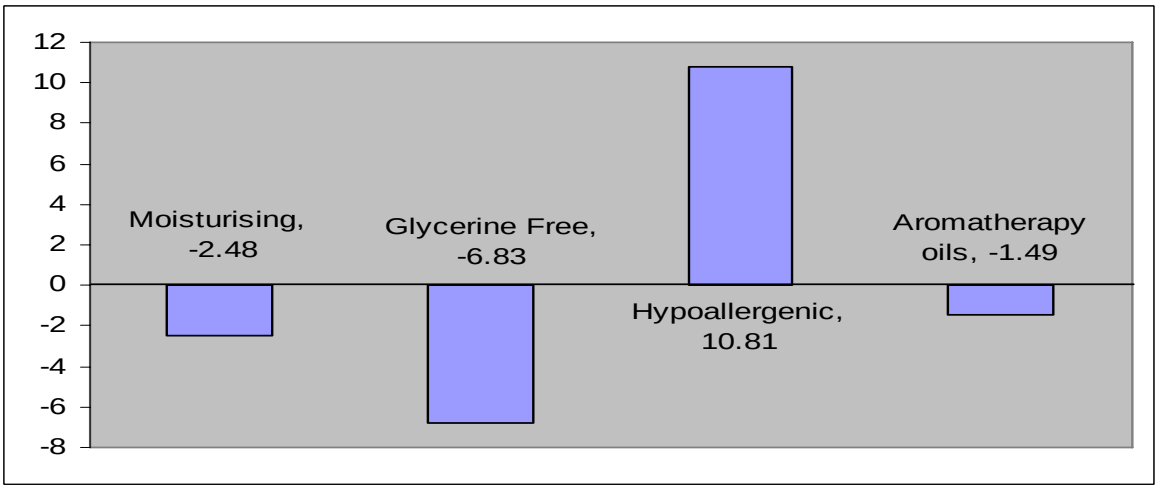


Table 5 presents the utilities for each of the levels of quality which is illustrated in Figure 14. Hypoallergenic is seen as the most important quality trait, followed by aromatherapy and moisturising properties respectively with the least favourite being glycerine free. The difference between the highest average utility and lowest average is the smallest of all the attributes, hence being identified as the least important.

Figure 14: Utility levels for Quality

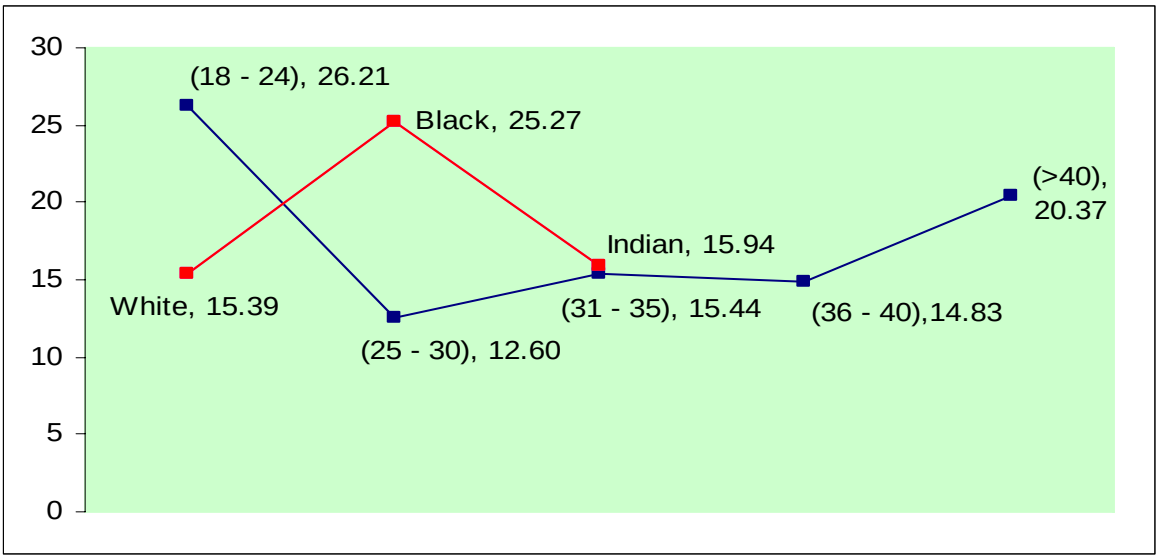


5.6 Price

The results reflected that price was the third most important predictor of consumer decision making, at 17.04%. Price and quality, according to Cronly *et al* (2005), are interrelated in that consumers often use price as an indicator of quality. This could explain why these two attributes are aligned the most with 17.04% and 14.68% of the decisions made.

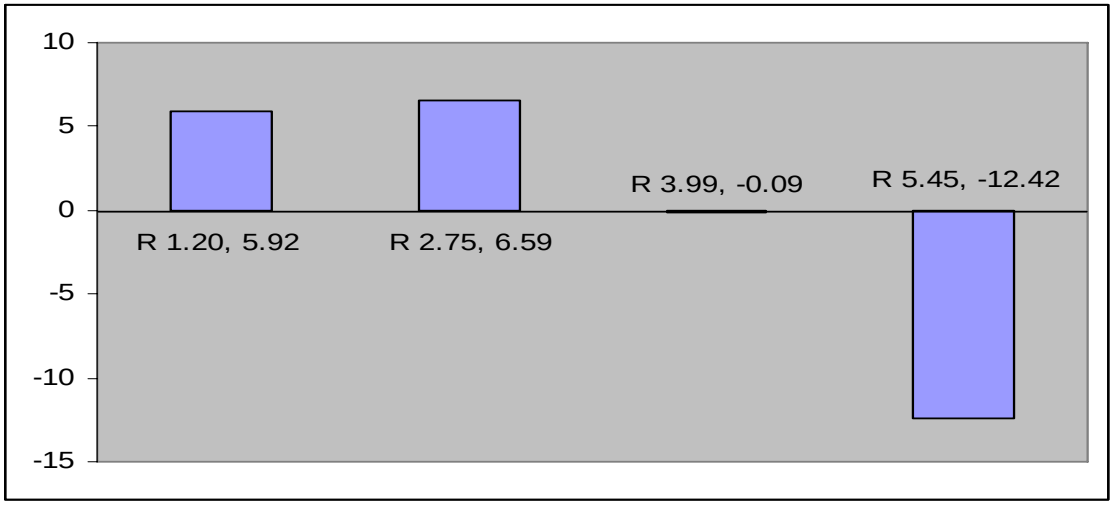
Price was considered statistically significant in respect of age and gender as reflected in Tables 12 and 15 respectively. The younger age group of 18 – 24, as indicated in Table 8 placed the highest importance on price (mean – 104.8), followed by the over forties with a mean of 81.5. The least importance placed on price was among the 25 – 30 age group with a mean of 50.4. In terms of race, the black population placed a higher importance on price (mean – 101.1) than both the indian (mean – 63.8) and white (mean – 61.6) population, as shown in Table 11. These results are illustrated in Figure 15, which reflects the relative importance of these two attributes for the respective demographic groups.

Figure 15: Relative importance of age and race in respect of price



The cheapest price surprisingly did not receive the highest utility, but received the second highest, even if marginally so (Refer to Figure 16). This could indicate that the perceived quality of the cheapest soap was inferior to that of the second cheapest. This however cannot be held true for the third and fourth highest prices, although at some point between the second and third highest price soap reflects the point where quality becomes less of an issue than price in the decision making process.

Figure 16: Utility levels for Price



5.7 Combined view

Based on the above results the following, illustrates the best and worst possible option in respect of all the attributes relating to the purchase of soap.

Table 17: The best and worst options that can be offered

Best Option	Worst Option
Products are NOT tested on animals	Products are tested on animals despite alternatives being available
Dove	Sunlight
Hypoallergenic	Glycerine Free
R2.75	R5.45

5.8 The importance of types of CSR

Section three of the questionnaire required the respondents to rank, in order of importance, the CSR initiative that was most significant to them. Table 16 reflects the results of this data with the most important CSR initiative being child welfare, while the least important being sporting initiatives. The order of importance is represented in Table 18.

Table 18: Importance of CSR initiatives

Ranking	CSR initiative	Mean
1	Child welfare	1.2668
2	Animal rights	0.8693
3	Environmental issues	0.4971
4	HIV/Aids	0.4077
5	Safer product enhancements	0.2400
6	Community based projects	0.0603
7	Unfair labour practices	-0.142
8	Sporting initiatives	-0.7400

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study originated from the following problem.

Corporate social responsibility appears to be a growing phenomenon among corporate South Africa. South African corporates are contributing millions of rand into a number of so called worthy causes. Some companies do not publicise what they contribute and to whom, while others use their CSR in their marketing campaigns in the hope of increasing consumer awareness and thus increase sales of their products or services.

The problem was to discover whether the participation of companies in CSR programmes actually effects the purchasing decisions of consumers in South Africa and whether specific CSR initiatives are considered more important in the eyes of the consumer. The problem also encompassed the ability to determine how important a criterion CSR was for the consumer, compared with brand, quality and price.

The problem was divided into three sub-problems and provisional answers were suggested based on the literature review on the subject and posed in the form of research questions.

6.1 Responses to research questions

Research Question 1
How critical is CSR to consumers when making a purchasing decision?

Research question one focused on determining how important CSR is in the decision making process faced by a consumer when purchasing a product. This

was achieved by the results of the conjoint analysis which reflected that CSR was the primary reason for the choice of product by nearly half, 45.11% of the respondents.

This confirms that consumers are willing to support a good cause, if the information is made available either prior to the purchase or at time of purchase. It is believed, from discussions with some of the respondents, that they would not have considered the CSR attribute of the product had it not been highlighted in the questionnaire. This supports the literature which stated that people are prepared to support a good cause if they are aware of it.

It must be noted however that this study was done on a product which constitutes a very small portion of a consumers monthly spend and they can therefore be magnanimous when it comes to supporting CSR as opposed to the price or brand of the product. Should the purchasing decision be for a product where a large portion of the consumer's income or savings would be spent, for example electronic goods, then the other three attributes could play a more important role and the consumer could be less sensitive to the CSR attributes. It is therefore recommended that this study be done on other products to assess whether the results from this study would be able to be duplicated.

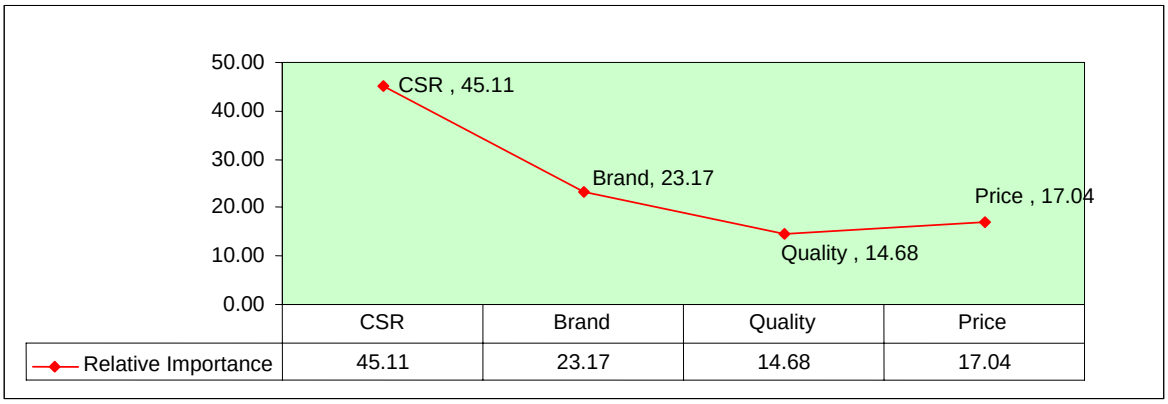
Research Question 2

What is the relative importance of the CSR attribute in the decision making process versus brand, quality and price?

Research question two is a confirmation of question one, but with the additional aim of comparing the importance of CSR against other criterion such as brand, quality and price. The results of the conjoint analysis highlighted the importance of CSR in the decision making process and the significant amount by which CSR was

preferred over the second choice, being brand, confirms the importance of this attribute to consumers in their decision making process. Brand was the second most important attribute, followed by price and lastly by quality. The results, based on the relative importance of the attributes are illustrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Relative importance of CSR, Brand, Quality and Price



From the results it appears that the quality of a product could be a function of two of the three attributes namely brand and price which both can create a perception in the minds of a consumer about the quality of the product. For example, the higher the price of a product and the more popular the brand, the better the perceived quality could be. There is currently little evidence to show that CSR creates a perception of quality, although this cannot be disproved either. Once CSR becomes a more prominent factor in consumer choice, the perceptions of the quality of these products could be studied.

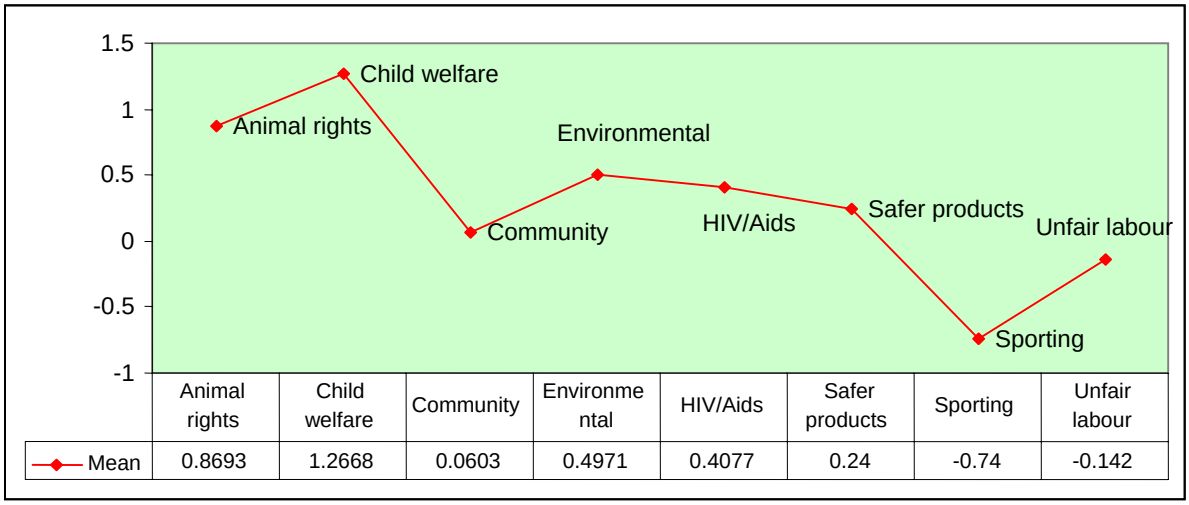
It was also discovered that CSR is important to various demographic groups. Females found this attribute more important than males and the indian and white population placed more value to this attribute than black people.

Research Question 3

What are the CSR initiatives that are considered important for consumers when deciding to purchase a product?

This question was presented in the questionnaire by the request to rank the most important of eight types of CSR initiatives. The most popular CSR initiative selected by the respondents was child welfare, which reflects the social need prominently highlighted in South Africa. Animal rights was established as the second choice, which was highlighted as an important cause in the literature, based on studies completed in the USA and UK. By far the least supported initiative was that of sporting initiatives which could explain the controversy which surrounded the support of the South African Lottery in developing sports related projects in disadvantaged communities rather than supporting other initiatives which the public viewed as more critical. The means of the initiatives are reflected graphically in Figure 18 reflecting these results.

Figure 18: Standardised means for social initiatives



	Animal rights	Child welfare	Community	Environmental	HIV/Aids	Safer products	Sporting	Unfair labour
Mean	0.8693	1.2668	0.0603	0.4971	0.4077	0.24	-0.74	-0.142

6.2 Recommendations to the Industry

Although this study was carried out on a particular product, the following recommendations are applicable to companies involved in CSR.

- Companies need to ensure that their target markets are aware of their CSR initiatives in order for their products to be associated with specific causes. Companies can use the fact that they participate in CSR to create a competitive advantage and therefore brand preference.

- The type of CSR initiative could be used to target specific markets however companies need to ensure that the most important causes are highlighted in their marketing campaigns in order to appeal to the bigger consumer market.

- Understanding the importance of a product's characteristics to the various demographical groups can assist companies in promotional campaigns to target these demographic groups. For example, using price as a key determinant in the black market could be more successful than using the CSR attribute.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

This research is a contribution to the research field that applies to the investment in CSR and the importance thereof.

Suggestions for further research studies include the following:

a. The same research should be repeated for other consumer products to establish if these findings are consistent across other products.

b. Further study into the importance of attributes among various demographics groups should be studied in order to be able to aim specific marketing messages to these groups.

c. Testing other aspects of CSR, not just products which are related to research on animals, should be studied to ascertain whether other CSR initiatives are considered important in the decision making process.

d. Now that CSR has become more entrenched in the business environment, researching the financial success of companies who undertake CSR in South Africa could prove valuable.

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APPENDIX A

Copy of questionnaire presented to the respondents.

Wits Business School Survey

The following survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Please answer all the questions as honestly as possible.

SECTION 1

Please complete some personal details, which are for research purposes only and will be kept confidential.

Kindly mark the applicable box

Which age group do you fall into:

18 - 24	
25 - 30	
31 - 35	
36 - 40	
over 40	

Gross household income per month:

0 – R2500	
R2501 – R7 500	
R7 501 - R15 000	
R15 001 - R25 000	
R25 001 and above	

Your Gender:

Male	
Female	

Race:

White	
Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
Other: specify	

SECTION 2

Please look at the following choices of various household soaps and the descriptions of the soaps. Kindly indicate your preference based on the details provided

No. 1 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Dove soap which includes aromatherapy oils and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animal, at a price of R5.45	 		Palmolive soap which has moisturising properties and is not tested on animals, at a price of R1.20	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 2 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Lux soap which is glycerine free with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R5.45	 		Dove soap which has moisurising properties and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R3.99	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 3

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Lux soap which has moisurising properties and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R2.75		Palmolive soap which is hypoallergenic and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R1.20

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 4

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Dove soap which is hypoallergenic and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R2.75		Lux soap which includes aromatherapy oils and is not tested on animals, at a price of R5.45

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 5 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Palmolive soap which has moisturising properties and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animal, at a price of R1.20	 		Sunlight soap which is glycerine free and not tested on animals, at a price of R3.99	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 6 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Sunlight soap which is glycerine free and not tested on animals, at a price of R3.99	 **OR** 		Lux soap which includes aromatherapy oils with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R2.75	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 7 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another		
Sunlight soap which has moisturising properties and not tested on animals, at a price of 2.75		Dove soap which is glycerine free and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R1.20

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 8 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another		
Palmolive soap which has moisturising properties with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R5.45		Lux soap which is glycerine free and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R2.75

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 9 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Lux soap which is hypoallergenic and is not tested on animals, at a price of R3.99	 		Sunlight soap which is glycerine free with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R2.75	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 10 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Palmolive soap which is glycerine free with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R3.99	 		Sunlight soap which is hypoallergenic and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R1.20	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 11

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Lux soap which is hypoallergenic and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R5.45		Dove soap which includes aromatherapy oils and is not tested on animals, at a price of R1.20

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 12

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Sunlight soap which is glycerine free and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R5.45		Palmolive soap which iincludes aromatherapy oils and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R3.99

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 13

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Dove soap which has moisturising properties and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R1.20		Palmolive soap which is hypoallergenic and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises the pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R2.75

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 14

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Palmolive soap which includes aromatherapy oils and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R3.99		Lux soap which has moisturising properties and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R1.20

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 15 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Sunlight soap which is hypoallergenic with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R1.20	 		Dove soap which has moisturising properties and is not tested on animals, at a price of R5.45	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 16 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Sunlight soap which includes aromatherapy oils with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R3.99	 		Palmolive soap which is glycerine free and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R5.45	
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 17

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Dove soap which is hypoallergenic and not tested on animals, at a price of R2.75	 	Sunlight soap which has moisturising properties and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R3.99

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 18

Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another

Palmolive soap which is glycerine free and makes use of modified animal-based testing, which minimises pain and distress to the animals, at a price of R2.75	 	Sunlight soap which is hypoallergenic with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R5.45

Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right

Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference

No. 19 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Sunlight soap which includes aromatherapy oils and is not tested on animals, at a price of R2.75	 			Lux soap which is glycerine free with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R3.99
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

No. 20 Please indicate how much you would prefer one soap more than another				
Lux soap which includes aromatherapy oils and tested on animals despite alternatives being available, at a price of R1.20	 			Dove soap which is hypoallergenic with a small portion of the product tested on animals with acceptable standards of care for the animals, at a price of R5.45
Strongly prefer left	Somewhat prefer left	Indifferent	Somewhat prefer right	Strongly prefer right
Please mark with an **X**, the box which most indicates your preference				

SECTION 3

In order to determine the importance of various social causes that you would support, please rank, from 1 to 8, the following in order of importance to **YOU**. 1 being the most important and 8 the least important

CAUSE	RANK 1-8
Animal rights (eg non testing on animals)	
Child welfare (eg children's homes)	
Community based projects (eg building of libraries)	
Environmental issues (eg supporting ozone friendly)	
HIV/Aids (preventative measures)	
Safer product enhancements (eg non use of harmful chemicals)	
Sporting initiatives (eg building of sports fields)	
Unfair labour practices (eg banning cheap labour – sweat shops)	

APPENDIX B

Section 1

Respondent	Age **0 = 18 to 24** **1 = 25 to 30** **2 = 31 to 35** **3 = 36 to 40** **4 = <40** **-1 = unknown**	Income **0 = 0 to R2500** **1 = R2501 to 7500** **2 = R7501 to R15000** **3 = 15001 to R25000** **4 = <R25001** **-1 = unknown**	Sex **0 = Female** **1 = Male**	Race **0 = white** **1 = black** **2 = indian** **3 = coloured**
1	4	4	1	0
2	2	2	0	0
3	3	4	0	0
4	4	4	0	0
5	2	4	0	0
6	2	3	1	0
7	4	4	0	0
8	3	3	0	0
9	4	4	0	0
10	3	3	0	0
11	0	1	0	0
12	4	4	0	0
13	0	2	1	2
14	0	2	1	1
15	3	3	0	0
16	0	-1	0	0
17	3	4	0	0
18	2	4	1	0
19	4	4	0	0
20	4	3	0	0
21	4	4	0	0

22	3	4	1	0
23	2	-1	0	0
24	4	3	0	0
25	1	3	1	1
26	4	4	1	1
27	2	3	0	0
28	2	4	0	0
29	1	3	0	0
30	1	3	0	0
31	2	1	0	0
32	1	2	0	0
33	1	4	0	0
34	0	2	0	0
35	1	-1	0	0
36	2	2	0	0
37	3	4	1	0
38	2	4	0	0
39	3	4	1	0
40	3	3	0	0
41	2	4	0	0
42	1	4	1	0
43	1	2	1	0
44	2	4	0	0
45	1	2	0	0
46	3	3	1	0
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48	4	4	0	0
49	2	4	0	0
50	2	2	0	0
51	3	4	0	2
52	4	4	1	0
53	3	4	0	0
54	1	3	1	0

55	1	2	0	0
56	3	4	0	0
57	4	3	1	0
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65	2	2	0	0
66	1	2	0	0
67	3	4	0	0
68	1	3	0	0
69	4	2	0	0
70	4	3	0	0
71	1	0	1	1
72	2	0	1	1
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75	2	4	1	0
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77	2	5	0	0
78	1	2	0	0
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80	2	1	0	0
81	2	2	1	1
82	2	3	0	0
83	3	3	0	2
84	4	3	0	0
85	2	0	1	1
86	2	0	1	1
87	2	4	0	0

88	0	1	0	0
89	1	4	1	0
90	0	0	1	1
91	3	0	1	2
92	0	1	0	1
93	0	2	1	2
94	3	0	1	1
95	4	0	0	1
96	3	1	1	1
97	0	0	1	1
98	0	0	0	1
99	4	1	1	1
100	0	1	1	1

Section 2

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
1 - 5	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**
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Section 3

0.49	0.83	-0.21	0.16	0.09	-0.06	-0.91	-0.39
0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75

Animal rights	**Child Welfare**	**Community based projects**	**Environmental issues**	**HIV/Aids**	**Safer product enhancements**	**Sporting Initiatives**	**Unfair labour practice**
5	2	6	3	1	8	7	4
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2	1	3	4	6	8	7	5
1	4	3	2	7	5	8	6
2	1	7	4	5	6	8	3
2	1	6	3	5	4	8	7
3	1	7	2	4	5	6	8
8	2	3	4	1	6	7	5
7	3	8	4	1	5	2	6
3	2	1	4	5	6	8	7
1	4	3	2	5	8	6	7
8	6	2	7	5	4	1	3
3	2	4	1	5	6	8	7

7	6	8	5	1	3	2	4
7	4	1	6	2	5	8	3
1	4	3	2	5	8	7	6
8	1	2	7	3	5	6	4
2	1	5	4	8	6	7	3
5	1	2	3	4	7	8	6
5	1	2	6	7	3	8	4
4	5	6	3	7	8	1	2
1	2	4	3	7	8	5	6
7	2	6	5	8	1	3	4