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Students' attitudes towards Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility or CSR is a phenomenon that has steadily been growing for the past decade. CSR is generally considered as activities performed by a company in order to strengthen its positive image. Previous research has indicated that there is a connection between a company's CSR actions and its consumer's reactions towards the company and its different product/s. However, few studies have investigated university students' attitudes towards CSR as well as different CSR initiatives. Therefore the aim of this dissertation is to study the knowledge, attitudes and the importance of CSR initiatives among young university business students. A second aim is to study the influence of CSR activities on the decision making process when in a buying situation.

In order to investigate this a quantitative survey was conducted among young business students at the University of Kristianstad. The survey consisted of 18 questions regarding CSR knowledge, attitudes and attributes. A total of 87 respondents participated and handed in the survey. The results demonstrated that even though the students were unsure as to what the abbreviation CSR stands for, when given examples the majority answered correctly. It also became evident that females considered CSR to be more important than the male respondents in many aspects. Especially the CSR initiative "Against animal testing" proved to be seen as much more important among the females than with the males. The results also revealed differences between the age groups. The age group 18-21 was the one that differed the most compared to the other three age groups (22-25, 26-30, 30+). In conclusion the students have a generally positive attitude towards CSR but it does not affect their purchasing decisions.

Keywords: CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, consumer behavior, decision-making process, students, CSR attitudes and attributes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter describes the background, problem, research question and limitations of this thesis.

1.1 Background

Corporate social responsibility or CSR is a phenomenon that has steadily been growing for the past decade. However, many researchers still claim that there is no generally accepted definition for CSR (Alniacik, Alniacik & Genc, 2011; Green & Peloza, 2011; Öberseder & Schlegelmilch, 2011). Nonetheless, CSR is generally considered as activities performed by a company in order to strengthen its positive image. Depending on the image the company would like to convey to its consumers emphasis could be put on the environment as well as human society (Claydon, 2011). In the literature different definitions of CSR are being used. Murray and Vogel (in Green & Peloza, 2011) explain CSR as an exchange process in which a firm offers something of value to its stakeholders. This could for example be a social benefit or public service, to consumers. In turn the company expects to receive approval and support from its customers. Another definition of CSR is stated by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) as a company's status and activities with respect to the company's stakeholder obligations. Furthermore the European Union defines CSR as;

“The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. To fully meet their social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders” (European Union, n.d., p.1).

Further more the European Union states that the aim of CSR is to enhance positive impacts, but also to minimize and prevent negative impacts.

It is well known that consumers play a key role as stakeholders in determining how successful a company is or will become. Research has indicated that there is a connection between a company's CSR actions and its consumer's reactions towards the company and its different product/s. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004, p. 9) state, "not only is 'doing good' – 'the right thing to do', but it also leads to 'doing better' through its positive effects on key stakeholders". Furthermore, Green and Peloza (2011) write that CSR today has a consistent level of positive support from consumers. Therefore, it is no surprise that more than 80% of the Fortune 500 companies engage in different CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2011). This shows that CSR is not only an ethical/ideological imperative but also an economical one for the companies and its business leaders. Green and Peloza (2011, p. 48) state "CSR contribute to a consumer's well-being", Outcomes from CSR include positive company evaluations, higher purchase intentions, positive word-of-mouth as well as willingness to pay "higher prices". CSR is associated with greater purchase intention as well as long-term brand loyalty. Another important factor is that 84% of the Americans claim that they would consider switching brands to one associated with a good cause, if price and quality are similar (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2011).

Due to the profits that can be gained by using CSR, a significant change has occurred. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2011) the focus has shifted from "whether a company engages in CSR or not" to "*how* they engage in CSR activities". These different activities could be community support, distributing environmentally friendly products as well as different employee support such as union relations and profit-sharing among others. Because of the increase in CSR activities consumers today practically expect companies to engage in these activities. The concept of CSR has grown so big that today it is mandatory, by law, in some countries, such as Denmark, for companies to engage in CSR activities (Schmeltz, 2011).

1.2 Problem formulation

According to previous research there are numerous factors that affect whether a company's CSR activities will lead to a consumer purchase (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2011; Alniacik et al., 2011). Moreover, Gabriel and Lang (2006, in Schmeltz, 2012) state that consumers today are unmanageable due to their many faces. Green and Peloza (2011) furthermore argue that not all CSR is evaluated in the same manner; hence different consumers evaluate CSR activities differently. Because of the vast difference between consumers it is important for the company to try to predict how their consumers will respond to different CSR initiatives. This is also important if companies as well as the society as a whole are going to gain from different CSR activities. It makes it important that the companies offer CSR activities as well as good products that appeal to the consumers. If this is not the case the consumers will not purchase any products and hence no one will gain from CSR.

The increasing interest from stakeholders in social and environmental issues has made it central for companies to engage in different CSR activities today. The company Ernst and Young (in Claydon, 2011 p. 415) state, "The retail consumers are pressuring businesses to act in socially and environmentally responsible products and corporate behavior". This furthermore illustrates the increasing demand from consumers for companies to engage in CSR activities. Due to this demand it becomes important for companies to analyze and foresee possible future trends in consumer attitudes and social behavior. Additionally the companies need to explore how to be able to take advantage of these emerging trends in designing their future CSR. This is important in order to gain competitive advantage in their field of business. What makes the choice of CSR activities even more complex is the fact that consumers typically evaluate the CSR activities as they relate to their own interests and social pathos (Green & Peloza, 2011). In addition to this consumers from different countries and/or cultures also evaluate global companies and their CSR differently (Endacott, 2003). In order for everybody to gain from CSR managers should make sure that they maximize the value of both CSR and products that is offered to the

consumers (Green and Peloza, 2011).

What makes CSR and consumers relationships even more complex is according to Morsing, Schultz and Nielsen (2008) that the consumers get caught in a so-called “Catch 22” situation. This means that consumers expect companies to engage in CSR activities. However at the same time the consumers find it inappropriate if the companies explicitly communicate their own good deeds. To further complicate the matter, a study made by Carrigan and Attalla (2004) found that consumers knowledge about CSR is quite limited. Another study also by Carrigan and Attalla (2001) revealed that consumers wait to be informed about a company’s CSR. Consumers do not actively search for the information themselves. This means that even if consumers have limited knowledge about CSR they do not, to some extent, want to be informed since this will be perceived as that the companies “brag” about themselves. However at the same time the consumers do not search for the information themselves but rather wait to be informed. This is a difficult paradox for companies to solve.

CSR research has so far mostly been focused on investors, business partners and governments. The relationship between CSR and consumers as well as the way consumers relate to CSR has according to Schmeltz (2012) often been overlooked. This can however be argued, but what can be claimed is that research in this field so far is limited. What makes young consumers interesting to investigate is the fact that they are predicted to be the largest consuming group within the next couple of years. Furthermore, according to Kongsholm the group between 18-30 will be the most influential and complex in the near future. Another gap in the existing CSR research is related to where the actual studies are performed. Many CSR studies have been performed in the United States, China, Taiwan and Egypt. However, no study, that I am aware of, has investigated consumer behavior related to CSR in Sweden.

1.3 Research question

The aim of this paper is to study the knowledge, attitudes and the importance of CSR initiatives among young university business students. A second aim is to study the influence of CSR activities on the decision making process when buying a product.

How does knowledge and attitudes towards CSR affect buying behavior in University students?

1.4 Limitations

Due to time restrictions only business students at the school of economics at one university was involved in this study. This may limit the generalizability of the results. The study may however in spite of this limitation give valuable insights in how university students value different CSR initiatives by companies. Using university students as the sample for the study also to some degree limits the generalizability of the results. The theories used in this paper are primarily based on CSR. Therefore, no theories regarding the area of psychology has been used, which could have been beneficial in behavior studies.

Chapter 2

Research method

This chapter contains the dissertation's research method and the purpose is to give an outline of the methods used in the dissertation.

2.1 Introduction

In the book, *Research methods for business students*, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) present a strategy used when designing a study. There are different stages a researcher should go through when writing a dissertation. These are placed as follows; research philosophies, research approach, research strategies, research choices, research time horizons and ultimately data collection and data analysis. This dissertation is using such a structure.

2.2 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the research philosophy you choose to use in your research also make assumptions as to how you view the world. The four different philosophies are; positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2006) researchers using positivism are interested in collecting general information and data from a large group of respondents. Furthermore, the researcher's own beliefs does not influence the study itself. Another important factor is that when using positivism the researcher uses already existing theories to develop different hypothesis. These hypotheses are later in the study either confirmed or rejected (Saunders et al., 2009). Positivism is mainly used when collecting numeric data (Easterby-Smith et al. 2006). The realistic philosophy states that the world we see through our own senses is the reality. Some similarities occur between the realistic philosophy and positivism, one is that they both assume a scientific approach to develop new knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009).

The interpretivism philosophy explains that it is important to understand the differences between humans in our role as social actors. Furthermore, it states that there is a significant difference between conducting research regarding objects rather than with human beings (Saunders et al., 2009). When using the interpretivism philosophy small samples are used and evaluated in detail in order to understand the views of large groups (Kasi, 2009). If the pragmatic philosophy is being used the researcher chooses a combination of all the different philosophies. The pragmatic researcher will most likely not use only one philosophy strictly but instead combine them all (Saunders et al., 2009).

This dissertation will be using the philosophy, positivism. One reason for this is the fact that general information will be collected and analyzed. Secondly data from a large group of respondents, university business students, will be gathered. The data that is gathered will be numeric which also applies when using positivism.

2.3 Research Approach

There are two different research approaches, the inductive and the deductive approach. When using the deductive approach, already existing research, literature and theories are used in order to create hypotheses and new theories. In short, the researcher builds hypotheses based on present theories. After finding present theories and constructing hypotheses, data is collected. When the data has been collected the hypotheses are tested and either confirmed or rejected. Consequently, the inductive approach is the opposite of the deductive. Hence, when an inductive approach is used the data is collected in the beginning of the process. When this is done, the researcher will then create a theory based on the previously collected data (Saunders et al., 2009). The inductive approach is sometimes called the bottom up approach and the deductive approach is called the top-down approach.

For this dissertation another approach has been used, the adductive one. This approach is a combination of the inductive and deductive approach. It combines the deductive theory-driven approach and the inductive empirical-driven approach. The use of this is mainly due to two reasons. The first reason is that there are already theories in this area which could be used for this dissertation.

2.4 Research Choice

There are two different methods towards gathering and analyzing information when it comes to research. These methods are qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative method is often used when trying to describe a phenomenon in an extensive manner. This is usually done by conducting interviews or by using a focus group. The qualitative method often takes a lot of time and resources to complete. Therefore, the number of participants is often low. Due to the small number of participants the finding cannot be generalized to the whole population. By using interviews and focus groups the examiner can get deeper understanding as to how the participants feel or think, what their past experiences are and so on. Consequently, information that might have been lost by using a survey may be discovered (Rhodes, 2013).

The second method is the quantitative; here a large number of participants will be used when trying to describe a phenomenon. Because of the large number of participants, the quantitative method can be used to summarize characteristics across these participants. Another benefit when using a survey is that different groups of participants can be compared (Rhodes, 2013). But it may also lead to generalizations being made about specific groups. However, according to Saunder et al. (2009), it is possible to combine the qualitative and the quantitative method within one study. Using only one method to gather information and one method to analyze the data is called mono-method. The opposite, using more than one data collection method as well as more than one analyzing method, is called multiple-method. However, the quantitative and qualitative methods are never mixed when using the multiple-method. When applying the mixed-method research both

quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analyzing processes are used (Saunders et al., 2009).

For this dissertation the quantitative method has been used since many participants are included. The dissertation is also conducted as a mono-method study. One advantage with the quantitative method is that it is more objective than the qualitative (Saunders et al., 2009). Another reason is the fact that generalizations are possible to make when using this method.

Chapter 3

Literature review

This chapter will present the theoretical framework and further examine CSR and its history. It will provide recognized theories from acknowledged researchers as to what CSR is and how it can affect consumers. In addition to this, the chapter will present different views on especially young consumers today. These theories have constituted the basis of my thesis.

3.1 History

Within marketing CSR is a part of ethics, sustainability as well as social responsibility. CSR is closely connected to cause-related marketing and is today a key part of a company's business strategy (Armstrong, Kotler, Harker, & Brennan, 2009; Jobber & Fahy, 2006). CSR is considered to have developed from a statement by Adam Smith in 1776. Smith stated, "The free market economy is self-regulating by means of the 'invisible hand', whereby an individual's self-interested goals will inevitably result in a democratic capitalist system" (Claydon, 2011 p. 406). Although, Carroll (1999) argues that it is possible to trace evidence of CSR for centuries it is thought that the modern concept of CSR has progressed and evolved primarily since the 1950's. According to research regarding CSR and its history it was the book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* written by Howard Bowen in 1953 that gave way to the prevailing literature on this subject (Alniacik, et al., 2011; Carroll, 1999; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Initially what is now known as CSR was called only SR, for Social Responsibility. Moura-Leite and Padgett (2011, p. 529) state; "The main idea of Bowen's book is that firms are vital centers of power and that firms' actions impact on the lives of the population in various ways". Bowen argued that SR was not the solution for all businesses' different problems, but that it was important in order to guide businesses in the right direction for the future. He wanted businessmen to see the importance of SR and what it might reflect back upon their companies (Alniacik, et al., 2011; Carroll, 1999; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). To further explain this Moura-Leite and Padgett (2011) state that during the 1950's the main focus was

on businesses' responsibilities to society as well as doing good deeds for society. However, during the 1950's researchers generally tried to develop a common definition or statement as to what CSR really represented (Carroll, 1999). Nonetheless, to this day, as stated previously, there is still no common definition for CSR (Clarkson in Green & Peloza 2011; Öberseder & Schlegelmilch, 2011; Alniacik et al., 2011).

Alniacik et al. (2011) argues that it was in the 1960's that CSR, or SR, was further formalized. Researchers tried to answer what social responsibility actually meant and they also tried to clarify its importance to businesses and society. One of the most influential writers regarding CSR, during this time, was Keith Davis (Carroll, 1999; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Davis reasoned that social responsibility should be seen in a managerial context. Furthermore, he stated that

"Some socially responsible business descisions could be justified by a long complicated process of reasoning as having a good chance of bringing long-run economic gain to the firm, thus paying it back for its socially responsible outlook" (Davis, 1960, p. 70 in Carroll, 1999, p. 271).

This view later, during the 1970's and 80's, became commonly accepted. Another contributor to the research regarding social responsibility during the 1960's was Joseph W. McGuire. In his book *Business and Society* from 1963 McGuire stated that a company does not only have economic and legal obligations toward a society. He claimed that a company's obligations and responsibilities extended beyond the economic and legal obligations (Carroll, 1999). However, McGuire fails to clarify what these other obligations might be or to give good examples. The only example McGuire gives is that;

"The corporation must take an interest in politics, in the welfare of its community, in education, in the 'happiness' of its employees and in fact in the whole social world about it. A business must act 'justly' as a proper citizen should" (McGuire 1963, p. 144 in Carroll, 1999, p. 272).

In 1967 Davis again tried to define the term social responsibility. This time he argued that the ethical consequences of one's acts might affect the interest of others. Therefore Davis claimed, that it is important to understand that social responsibility is not only a matter of person-to-person contacts but also involves viewing to the whole social system (Carroll, 1999). One of the reasons as to why CSR grew in the late 1950's, 60's and 70's is due to the many social changes during this period in time (Carroll, 1999; Claydon, 2011). These social changes were a response to the many social movements regarding the environment, worker safety, consumers and employees that occurred (Carroll, 1999). This led to that numerous legislations followed, these legislations regulated business's conduct in order to protect employees as well as consumers. Because of this the 1960's and 70's are sometimes referred to as a stage of "corporate social responsiveness" (Lee, 2008 in Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011).

During the 1970's an expansion and spreading of CSR followed (Alniacik et al., 2011). Researchers at this time focused mainly on the implementation of CSR as long as it did not conflict with the fundamental interests of the company (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In 1971 the book *Business in Contemporary Society*, written by Harold Johnson, was published. Johnson wrote that a socially responsible company is one that not only strives for a large profit for its stockholders. The company should also take into account its employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities as well as the nation itself. Further Johnson believed that the pursuit of socioeconomic goals in collaboration with a socio-cultural system, was the way for a company to reach social responsibility. Johnson's view was that social responsibility should be perceived as long-run profit maximization (Carroll, 1999). In 1970 the Opinion Research Corporation conducted a public survey regarding CSR. The result showed that approximately two thirds of the respondents believed that business had a moral obligation to help other institutions to achieve social progress. Furthermore, the respondents believed that the obligation should be imposed even at the expense of the profitability (Carroll, 1999). In 1973 Keith Davis presented the "Iron-Law of Responsibility". The law stated that social responsibilities of businessmen needed to be in proportion to their social power (Davis, 1973 in Carroll, 1999). Furthermore Davis argued that,

”In the long-run those who do not use power in a manner which society considers responsible will tend to lose it” (Biscaccianti, 2003; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Davis elaborated this further by stating that if a company does not use its social power, it will lose its social position in society because other groups or companies will occupy it (Carroll, 1999; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In 1975 Keith Davis together with Robert L. Blomstrom wrote a book, *Business and Society: Environment and Responsibility*, regarding CSR. In the book Davis and Blomstrom describe the CSR concept as; “the managerial obligation to take action to protect and improve both the welfare of society and the interest of organizations” (Davis & Blomstrom, 1975, p. 6 in Alniacik et al., 2011, p. 235).

According to Graham Wilson (2011), the research regarding CSR was overshadowed by “the quality movement” during the 1980’s. Despite this numerous articles regarding CSR was published during this period in time. The big difference between how CSR was perceived in the 1970’s and 80’s, is that companies became more responsive to their stakeholders during the latter (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In contrast, during the 1970’s managers tended to apply traditional management functions when dealing with CSR. The reason for this change might be that business and social interest appeared closer together than what they had been previously (Claydon, 2011). According to the authors, L.E.Preston and J.E. Post, companies should consider the consequences of their actions. However, the authors did not believe that the companies themselves were required to resolve all the problems of society. Instead Preston and Post thought that the companies should target the problem areas in society related to their own activities and interests (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Furthermore, Preston and Post were in favor of the involvement of companies in the public policy process. They stated that “It may be essential that the companies concerned participate openly in politics” (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011, p. 532). The stakeholder theory, which was developed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, states that;

“Anyone who might affect the business objective and anyone who might be affected by its realization are considered to be stakeholders including shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, natural environment, government and general society. Each stakeholder group has expectations of the corporation. The

corporation's reactions to these expectations are critical to its current and future success ” (Freeman, 1984, in Alniacik et al., 2011, p. 235).

Although there is not a clear definition or description of CSR, many researchers today claim that it has meant a lot for further research regarding CSR (Alniacik et al., 2011; Carroll, 1999; Claydon, 2011; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). The reason for this is because Freeman accentuate the connection between a company and its different stakeholders and how important these stakeholders are in order for a company to be successful. Moreover, Freeman argues that a socially responsible company must consider the effects of its actions on every entity that may be directly or indirectly affected by the company (Alniacik et al., 2011).

During 1980 Thomas M. Jones emphasised the fact that CSR should be seen as a process. Jones believed that CSR ought not to be seen as a set of outcomes but instead as a process (Carroll 1999). A year later, in 1981, Frank Tuzzolini and Barry Armandi proposed their view on CSR. They suggested and stated that “Organizations, like individuals, has criteria that need to be fulfilled or met, just as people do” (Carroll, 1999, p. 285). Therefore, Tuzzolini and Armandi advised that CSR should be accessed according to a need-hierarchy framework, built up after Maslow's need hierarchy. The authors believed it would be helpful to have an analytical framework to ease the operationalization of CSR. Furthermore, they stated that the model was a conceptual tool where social responsibility could be reasonably assessed (Carroll, 1999). Peter Drucker was another author focusing on CSR during this time. In 1984 Drucker wrote that it is not simply the profitability that is important for a company. Drucker believed that a business or company should “convert” its social responsibilities into other business opportunities. Furthermore he stated;

“The proper ‘social responsibility’ of business is to tame the dragon, that is to turn a social problem into economic opportunity and economic benefit, into productive capacity, into human competence, into well-paid jobs, and into wealth” (Carroll, 1999, p. 286).

During the 1990's the notion of CSR almost became universally approved as well as promoted. CSR has been promoted by not only by non-governmental organizations but also by corporations, consumers and governments (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In order to explain and comprehend the change regarding CSR the American magazine Fortune presented a study viewing the Fortune 500 companies. The study was done the first time in 1977 and the second time in 1990. In 1977 less than half of the Fortune 500 companies included CSR as an essential component. Although, this was about to change. In 1990 nearly 90 percent of the companies listed CSR as one of the basic elements of their organizational goals (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Another reason for the vast growth of CSR in the mid 1990's was the improvement and easyness of global communication capabilities. Moura-Leite & Padgett (2011, p. 534) further explains, "The Internet improved the power of institutions to create new pressures on companies to foster greater CSR".

In 1991 Archie B. Carroll developed a model called the pyramid of CSR. As stated by Claydon (2011, p. 409) "The model emphasizes the importance of businesses responding to all aspects of the social world: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic". Carroll constructed his model upon the fact that all business responsibilities are expected upon the principle that a business should create profit for its shareholders from supply and demand of society (Claydon 2011). This can be found at the bottom of the pyramid. Just as in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a principle at the top can not be accomplished before the bottom ones has been completed. This means that the ethical part of the pyramid can not be fulfilled until both the economic and the legal parts has been finalized. The second tier of the pyramid regards legal responsibilities. Consequently a business must adhere to the law and make sure it remains a responsible business practitioner (Claydon, 2011). The third tier, ethical, maintains that a business is obliged to do what is right, just and fair. It also states that a business should avoid any harm to its stakeholders. The final tier, philanthropic, ensures that the business or corporation is a good citizen to the community. Furthermore the business should contribute resources where they are needed. The pyramid of CSR rests on the notion that a business should first and foremost be profitable. Claydon (2011, p. 409) further

explains “All other responsibilities (legal, ethical and philanthropic) come after this, meaning that the company will only ever be socially responsible if it fits in with the economic goal of maximising profit”. Carroll himself summarised the model by stating the following; “The CSR firm should strive to make a profit, obey the law, be ethical and be a good corporate citizen” (Carroll, 1991, p. 43). Even though this model has received a lot of criticism it is still widely used today (Claydon, 2011).

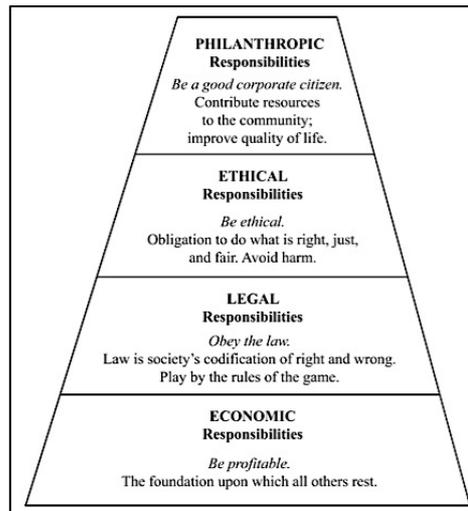


Figure 1. The pyramid of CSR.

(Based on: Claydon, *A new direction for CSR: the shortcomings of previous CSR models and the rationale for a new model*, p. 410, 2011)

Carroll argued, in his article from 1991, that the term social within CSR was being seen as vague. Due to this questions as to whom the business or company was responsible to, had risen (Carroll 1999). Consequently, Carroll suggested that the stakeholder concept developed from Freeman in 1984, as specified previously in this article, should be used. Carroll (1991, p. 43) further explains “The stakeholder concept puts ‘names and faces’ on the societal members or groups who are most important to business and to whom it must be responsive”.

During the 2000’s CSR definitively became an important strategic issue for many companies (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Another concept that became increasingly important during this time was sustainability. As stated by Claydon

(2011, p. 411) “Sustainability focuses on ensuring that resource utilisation of the present does not affect the future”. Companies today engage in different sustainable activities such as renewable energy, minimising pollution and many others. These different sustainable activities can also be seen as a form of CSR (Claydon, 2011). During the 2000’s the connection between CSR and corporate financial success grew clearer (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In 2002 the company PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted a survey analysing the association between CSR activities and corporate financial success. They reported that 70 percent of global chief executives believed that CSR was fundamental to their companies’ profitability. Moura-Leite & Padgett (2011, p. 535) further explains; “This evidence suggests that CSR is evolving into a core business function that is central to the firm’s overall strategy and vital to its success”. The financial success of the company and its actions of CSR exist in a continuum (Claydon, 2011, p. 412). Due to the growth and evolution of CSR the author Sandra Waddock in 2008 claims that new rules of behavior for large multinational companies has emerged. The rules mean that a company should go beyond maximizing shareholder value. Companies today should also generate better corporate responsibility regarding environmental and social issues among others (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Furthermore, Moura-Leite & Padgett (2011, p. 535) summarises this in their article; “The essence of CSR in the 2000’s is ‘doing good to do well’. However, the growth of CSR and its connection to company profitability may also cause problems. CSR may cause an increased corporate attention only to certain social needs that are less costly and possibly profitable. Consequently, more costly social needs which are less profitable, might be ignored.

3.2 Young consumers

Young consumers today, 19-30 years old, is sometimes labeled as the Generation Me, the iGen or millennials (Twenge, 2006 in Schmeltz, 2011; Chau, 2012). Jean Twenge is an author that has studied and tried to define the behavior and traits of the millennials. According to Twenge (2012) young people today have been taught to put their own needs first. Due to this other traits such as, society, the

community and group cohesion or belonging has declined. Twenge's studies have also shown a decline in concern for the environment as well as civic interest (Chau, 2012). Chau (2012, p. 2) further explains, "People today are more isolated and wrapped up in their own problems". However, while some traits have declined others have developed. According to Johnson (2009) every consumer today is looking for a bargain. Johnson (2009) further claims that it does not matter which market you are in, everyone wants as much value as possible, for as little as possible. He further evaluates that this must become a problem for organic, green, environmentally friendly products and so on. This due to the fact that such attributes makes products more expensive and hence, fewer consumers will buy them. It is often these products that are connected to different CSR activities or initiatives. Previous research argues that consumers are not willing to pay a price premium for products tied to CSR activities (Öberseder et al., 2011). Schmeltz (2011) further raises the problem that young consumers today have grown up in a world full of possibilities. This has lead to high expectations from the millenials regarding their life in general (Schmeltz, 2011). The question is, what this generation expects from companies today? Are young consumers only interested in what is in it for me? Schmeltz (2011, p. 32) further elaborates,

"It would be reasonable to assume that young consumers have high expectations of what companies ought to do for society because the effects of such changes will ultimately benefit themselves".

3.3 The decision making process

The buyer decision making process consist of five stages, as shown in Figure 2 below; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation of decision. However, it is important to remember that a consumer making a routine purchase may skip several stages. The first stage, need recognition, arises when the buyer recognizes a problem or need. The need can be driven by internal stimuli, a person's regular needs such as food, or external stimuli, for example an advertisement (Armstrong et al., 2009; Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Jobber and Fahy (2006, p. 60) state;

”Two issues govern the degree to which the buyer intends to resolve the problem: the magnitude of the discrepancy between the desired and present situation, and the relative importance of the problem”.

When the need recognition is sufficiently strong the consumer will enter the information search stage. The information search can be internal or external. By using the internal search the consumer derives information from memory. If the internal search is not satisfactory the external search is used (Jobber & Fahy, 2006). This is done by gaining information from various different external sources. The sources can be personal such as family and friends; commercial such as advertisements, displays and packaging; public, for example mass media and the Internet or they can be experiential sources such as handling or examining the product itself (Armstrong et al, 2009). The purpose of this stage is to create a group of brands that might solve the consumer’s problem. This group formation is called an awareness set (Jobber & Fahy, 2006).

The third stage that the consumer or buyer goes through is the evaluation of alternatives. According to Jobber and Fahy (2006), the first step in this stage is to reduce the awareness set further to an even smaller group. This group is called the evoked set. The evoked set contains the products or services that the consumer is seriously thinking about buying. These products are then investigated further according to different criteria. The different criteria or attributes may include price, style, reputation and so on. Each criterion is of different importance to the consumer. A purchase can also be low in involvement or high in involvement for the consumer. When a purchase is high in involvement the consumer is more likely to conduct a more extensive evaluation (Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Hence, when a purchase is low involving a consumer might just act on impulse and not evaluate as thoroughly. There are a number of factors that influence whether a purchase is low or high involving. Firstly, involvement tends to be high when the consumer’s self-image might be affected. This may include clothing, jewelry and cosmetics. Secondly, perceived risk is also associated with high involvement. Jobber and Fahy (2006, p. 62) further explains,

”The risk of buying the wrong house is much higher than that of buying the wrong chewing gum, because the potential negative consequences of the wrong decision are higher”.

The third factor is social; involvement tends to be high when social acceptance is dependent on the choice at hand. The last are hedonistic factors. When the purchase might lead to a high degree of pleasure, the involvement will be high (Jobber & Fahy, 2006).

The fourth stage is the purchase decision stage. According to Armstrong et al. (2009) the consumer’s purchase decision is usually to buy the most preferred brand after the evaluation that has been done. However, two factors may change the purchase intention and the actual purchase decision. The first is, attitudes of others, if someone important to you prefers a specific choice, chances are that so will you. The second factor is unexpected situational factors; this means that unexpected events may change the purchase intent. One example is that an economic recession, as the one we experienced in 2008, might occur. If a consumer was thinking about buying a house or a car they might change their mind. Consequently, purchase intentions do not always result in actual purchase decisions (Armstrong et al., 2009).

The last stage in the decision making process is the post-purchase evaluation. Consumers almost always feel some kind of concern regarding their purchase, this is known as cognitive dissonance. This is due to the fact that by choosing one product the consumer has rejected many others. Uncertainty regarding if the right choice was made often develops. What determines if a consumer is content with the purchase depends on the relationship between the consumer’s expectations and the product’s perceived performance. If the perceived performance is bigger than the consumer’s expectations a feeling of delight appears. Consequently, if a consumer’s expectations are met, the consumer is satisfied. However if the perceived value is less than the expected, the consumer will be dissatisfied with the purchase. In order for consumers not to get dissatisfied with the purchase

companies should only promise what their product actually can deliver (Armstrong et al., 2009). Hence, in order to get a customer to feel delight, companies should underestimate their products. However, this is risky since it may not lead to a purchase at all.

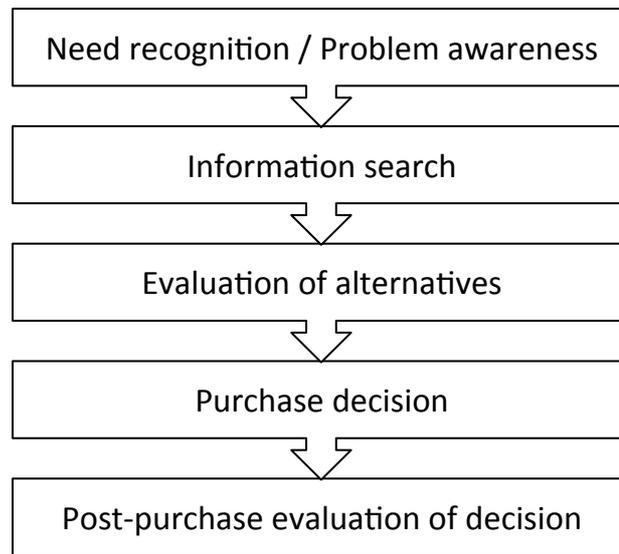


Figure 2. Decision making process.

(Based on: Armstrong et al., *Marketing an Introduction*, p. 161, 2009; Jobber & Fahy, *Foundations of marketing*, p.61, 2006)

3.4 CSR and consumer behavior

Previous studies has shown that consumer do care and are also affected by CSR (Claydon, 2011; Schmeltz, 2012). However, consumers behaviours may be dependent on the value they receive from CSR (Green & Peloza, 2011). This could be because consumers evaluate a company's CSR as they relate to their own interests. Furthermore, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) found in their research that consumers appeared to be unwilling to pay a price premium for the products of companies engaging in CSR activities. However, the willingness to pay more was apperant when the consumer was a strong supporter of the issue at the center of the CSR activity. According to Green and Peloza (2011) consumers do not view CSR as an overall impression of a company. Instead, they view each CSR activity that is presented to them and evaluate how it might benefit their purchase. Nonetheless, research has shown that socially responsible companies are more

attractive to consumers than those who are not (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

3.4.1 The ethically involved consumer.

A study written by Carrigan and Attalla (2001) examined whether consumers care about companies ethical choices. According to their findings, a company's poor ethical choice do not necessarily have a negative influence on consumers choice. Carrigan and Attalla (2004) found that consumers knowledge about CSR is quite limited. This means that the main reason a consumer chooses a specific product is not due to the company's CSR. It is rather due to wheter they favor the product itself or not. Consumers wait to be infromed about a company's CSR, they do not actively search for the information themselves (Carrigan and Attalla 2001). Eventhough price, value, trend and brand image are the most important factors for consumers when they are choosing a product, CSR has some influence on the choice. As stated before, consumers may be willing to pay a premium price for products that are made in socially and environmentally responsible ways. However, consumers are not willing to spend time on finding out which companies that are socially responsibleand some consumers continue to buy products from firms which they know are using unethical behaviour. Consequently, cosumers do not act as they claim they do or as they maybe would like to.

In the study made by Carrigan and Attalla (2001) consumers were categorized into four different types based on the consumer's ethical awareness and ethical purchase intention. The characters of the different types are shown in Figure 3 below. Obvious consumers are those with low ethical awareness and low ethical purchase intention. Consumers with low ethical awareness but high ethical purchase intention are called confused and uncertain consumers. Cynical and disinterested consumers have high ethical awareness but a low ethical purchase intention. The last type in the model are the caring and ethical consumers, they obtain sufficient CSR information and are highly ethical when they are making a purchase.

		Ethical Awareness	
		High	Low
Ethical Purchase Intention	High	Caring and Ethical	Confused and Uncertain
	Low	Cynical and Disinterested	Oblivious

Figure 3. Consumer attitudes towards ethical purchasing.
 (Based on: Carrigan & Attalla, *The Myth of the Ethical Consumer - Do Ethics Matter in Purchase Behavior?* p. 572, 2001)

Just like the stakeholder theory discussed earlier, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) points out that besides consumers there are other stakeholders that also care about a company's CSR. It is therefore important to realize that, each stakeholder group has a different focus on a company's CSR. According to Carrigan and Attalla (2001) the focus is usually what affects their interest the most.

3.4.2 The socially responsible consumer.

A study performed by Bhattacharya and Sen in 2001 examined the relationship between a company's CSR activities and consumers individual character. In the study consumers reactions towards CSR activities was reviewed by exploring time, approach and target. Bhattacharya and Sen (2001) found that consumers reactions towards CSR activities are much more complex than their impact on company or corporate evaluation. Consumers reactions towards CSR activities is highly dependent on the consumers' own intersests. Furthermore, the quality of the product also plays a role in a consumers purchase intetion. What also plays a role in this process is the consumer's perception of a company's CSR. The study showed that low CSR evaluation could reduce purchase intetion even though the product was of good quality. This is due to that consumers are exposed to informtaion about a company earlier than they are exposed to information about a product. Consequently, the consumer has already formed a perception or opinoin regarding the product before even knowing about it (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001).

According to a study by Öberseder et al. (2011) consumers do consider companies CSR activities when making a purchase decision. However, CSR activities are of trivial importance compared to other choice criteria such as price, quality, brand, country of origin or service. In short, Öberseder et al. (2011, p. 453) state “CSR is not at the top of many consumers lists”. The relative weight given to CSR activities in the decision making process is closely related to the consumer’s financial status. A consumer with good financial status are more interested in CSR compared to those who do not have a good financial status. Due to this, one can assume that consumers with a good financial status can “afford” to consider CSR as an important factor when buying products. Öberseder et al. (2011) claim that there are two core factors being used when consumers evaluate CSR as a part of their decision making process. These are sufficiency of CSR information and the credibility of the CSR activities. Consumers with sufficient information regarding a company’s CSR activities will evaluate its credibility. In contrast, a consumer with insufficient information about a company’s CSR activities will not include CSR as a factor in their decision making process. According to Öberseder et al. (2011), consumers with insufficient CSR information are waiting to be informed by the companies.

Mohr et al. (2001) also studied consumers view on company’s engaging CSR activities and how it might influence them when making a purchasing decision. They found that consumers are positive in general regarding company’s and their pursuit for economic profit. However, as stated previously, consumers expect company’s to be socially responsible. Consequently, consumers are more positive towards socially responsible companies than towards socially irresponsible companies. Mohr et al. (2001) reported that consumers are aware of that companies engage in CSR activities not only to be responsible but to also gain a positive reputation. However, this did not affect the consumers perception of the socially responsible companies in a negative way. The study conducted by Mohr et al. (2001) clearly shows how important CSR is for a company’s reputation. It also shows that consumers do care about CSR and take it into account when buying products.

3.5 Conclusion

Previously, different definitions of CSR have been discussed. As a conclusion there does not exist only one definition considered being the correct one. The definition that will be used for this dissertation is the following; “CSR is a headline term used for corporate ethical, social, and environmental responsibility in many businesses today” (Armstrong et al., 2009, p. 567).

Figure number 2 and 3 were mainly used when producing the questionnaire. However, they will also be helpful when answering the research questions and its sub questions. Various researches have shown that CSR is important for consumers and for some it plays a more central role than for others. This dissertation aim at studying university business student’s knowledge and attitudes towards CSR initiatives and their relative importance in a purchasing situation. Furthermore, to study the influence of different CSR activities on the decision-making process when in a buying situation.

It is important for companies to understand where their consumers are placed in this figure. If they have this knowledge they can construct better CSR and market it better. Hence, if a lot of students fit into the oblivious part of the figure it is a signal that the companys CSR information do not reach this segment of their consumers properly. In order for CSR to be positive, consumers need to buy products from socially responsible corpoorations. This dissertation aim at giving an insight as to if companies may need to change their CSR advertising in order to reach these segment of their consumers or if it is suitable as it is now. Present students will be the largest group of consumers within the next couple of years (Schmeltz, 2011). Consequently, this is a major reason as to why students were chosen to be studied in this dissertation. Another reason is the fact that a lot of the business students will later go on to work for different companies. It may therefor be beneficial for companies to have an understanding of business student’s attitudes towards CSR.

Today issues regarding the environment are becoming more and more important and in almost every store ecological products are available. Accordingly, I decided to use three questions in the survey specifically tied to CSR events. If students were concerned about CSR, it would be of interest to know which factor is the most important one. The three CSR activities explored are; related to the environment, the third world and local commitment activities. It is also interesting to know where the different squares in Figure 3 are placed within the purchasing process model or decision-making process.

3.5.1 Sub questions

The research question has been de-constructed into smaller research questions or set of statement that will help answering it. These questions are the following:

Do university students, as consumers, care about CSR when they purchase products? Are they willing to pay more for products from socially responsible companies than others? How important is CSR for the students (consumers) in the decision making process? Is there a difference in opinion between age and gender regarding CSR and CSR activities or attributes? Is there a difference between consumers that have knowledge about CSR or not?

As stated previously consumers do consider companies CSR activities when making a purchase decision (Öberseder et al., 2011). But it has also been illustrated that CSR is not that important when compared to other choice criteria such as price, quality, brand, country of origin or service (Öberseder et al., 2011). It would be interesting to explore if this is also the case with students or not. When a consumer is evaluating CSR as a part of their decision making process two core factors are being used (Öberseder et al., 2011). These are sufficiency of CSR information and the credibility of the CSR activities.

When a consumer has sufficient information regarding a company's CSR activities he/she will evaluate its credibility. However, if a consumer has insufficient information about a company's CSR activities they will not include CSR as a factor in their decision making process. This is one reason why it is important for companies to engage in CSR activities and to market them accordingly. In short, consumers with insufficient CSR information are just waiting to be informed by the companies.

Previous research has also indicated that consumers find it important that companies engage in various CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Green & Peloza, 2011; Schmeltz, 2012). However, the relative weight given to CSR activities in the decision making process is closely related to the consumer's financial status. It could then be argued that consumers with good financial status are more interested in CSR compared to those who do not have a good financial status. It is therefore interesting to see if this is in accordance when for students as consumers since they, generally, they do not have a good economy. A study done by Mohr et al. (2001) revealed how important CSR is for a company's reputation. Furthermore, it illustrated that consumers actually do care about CSR and take it into account when buying products. The study revealed that consumers are generally more positive towards socially responsible companies than towards socially irresponsible companies. Like previous studies it also stated that consumers expect companies to be socially responsible.

Chapter 4

Empirical Method

The empirical method is presented in this chapter. The research strategy used in the thesis as well as sampling, reliability and validity are discussed as well as data collection and operationalization.

4.1 Research Strategy

Research strategies are strategies that the researcher can choose from in order to continue forward with the study. There are numerous different strategies, such as; experiments, surveys, action research, case study, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. The strategy chosen depends on the research question and how best to answer it. According to Saunders et al. (2009) several strategies can be used in a combination. A more substantial explanation of the different strategies can be found in Saunders et al. (2009). This dissertation used surveys as a strategy. According to Saunders et al. (2009), this is the best strategy when measuring psychological and sociological factors. Another reason is the fact that the quantitative method was used. Consequently, a large number of standardized data can be collected and evaluated or compared. Statistics can then be used in order to suggest relationships between different variables or to make comparisons between them. One reason for using surveys in this dissertation is that they are easily understood. Another reason is the time limitations; surveys can be conducted and evaluated rather quickly. However, a disadvantage is that there is generally a limit as to how many questions that can be asked. Consequently, the data collected may not be as wide in range as it might become when using another strategy (Saunders et al., 2009). The aim was to get approximately 100 respondents to answer the survey and then use appropriate statistics to evaluate the data.

4.2 Time Horizon

Time horizon describes the time perspective for completion of a study. Two types of time horizons are explained in Saunders et al. (2009), the cross sectional and the longitudinal. The longitudinal horizon is often used when studying change and development. Therefore this horizon is generally used when trying to answer if anything has changed over time. When studying a phenomenon at a specific time the cross sectional horizon is used. Most dissertations are often time limited and therefore cross sectional (Saunders et al., 2009). As this dissertation has a fixed time limit the cross sectional horizon was applied.

4.3 Sampling

Sampling is used since it is virtually impossible to ask every person part of a population to partake in a study. By using sampling, data only needs to be collected from a sub-group (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two techniques of sampling, these are the probability sampling and non-probability sampling. When the possibility of each person to be selected from the population is identified and equal, the probability sampling is used. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 214) further explains;

“Probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based research strategies where you need to make inferences from your sample about a population to answer your research question(s) or to meet your objectives.”

When using the non-probability sampling technique, the researcher selects samples based on his/her subjective judgment (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, the chance for a member of the population to be chosen is not known. Non-probability technique was used in this dissertation as well as convenience sampling. This dissertation targeted students from the first year from the business program at Kristianstad University. The respondents were chosen randomly, but with the help of a sampling frame.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), the sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all the persons in the population from which the sample will be drawn. The sample selection criteria for this dissertation were business students in year one at Kristianstad University. Therefore, the sample frame will be a full list of all these students. If the list is incomplete or not up to date there is a chance that some persons will be excluded. The survey was handed out before class at the University of Kristianstad, therefore any student who did not attend that class did not participate in the study. Furthermore, it will make it impossible for every person in the population to have a chance of selection. Due to this, the sample will not be representative of the total population and therefore the research may be criticized (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.4 Data collection

According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are two forms of collecting data, primary and secondary. Primary data is collected directly from the respondents by the researcher him/herself and is new data. Hence, secondary data is data that has already been collected but can be reused and reanalyzed. This dissertation used only primary data. The primary data was collected using a survey (see Appendix 1). The survey is mainly built up by using rating questions in order to get the respondents opinion. The likert-style rating scale was used. Respondents were business students at Kristianstad University. The survey was handed out to the students before class at Kristianstad University and then collected after approximately 20 minutes. This way of using questionnaires is called self-administered delivery and collection questionnaire. The questionnaire is handed out and later collected once completed. By using this method the respondents remain anonymous. According to Saunders et al. (2009) anonymous respondents will have a positive effect on the response rate as well as the reliability. Furthermore self-administered questionnaires are less time consuming and less expensive than for example interviews (Saunders et al., 2009). The reason for using a questionnaire instead of interviews for this dissertation is among other things the number of participants needed. When conducting interviews it often

takes a lot of time and resources to complete, hence the number of participants is low. However, when conducting questionnaires a large number of participants can be used when trying to describe and analyze a phenomenon.

4.3.1 Statistical methods.

In order to analyze the data collected from the survey the PASW/SPSS 19.0 statistical software package for Windows was used. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables were analyzed in order to get the results in percentage. When analyzing if there was a difference between men and women and their attitudes towards CSR the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used. This was done since it is a group comparison, between men and women, the distribution of scores is non-normal and the independent variables are categorical (Creswell, 2009). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test identified that the data for this dissertation did not have a normal distribution pattern. In order to further compare the results the sum of ranks was also used for analyzing the data. The sum of ranks illustrate in which group the responses was larger compared to the other group. Hence, the group with the highest sum of rank for a specific question also ranked this higher than the other group did. When analyzing differences in opinion between the different ages of the respondents the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The reason for using the Kruskal-Wallis test for this instead of Mann-Whitney is that it allows you to compare more than two independent groups (Laerd statistics, n.d.). This was necessary since my survey has four different age groups. The questions that showed a significant difference between the four age groups were then analyzed further. This was done in order to understand which specific age groups, between the four, had a difference in opinion. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney test was done comparing each group with the others.

4.5 Operationalization

4.5.1 Age and Gender

First, questions regarding demographics were asked in the questionnaire (Question 1 and 2 in Appendix 1). The demographic questions were regarding the

respondents age and gender. Previous research has shown differences in attitude towards CSR when it comes to age (Twenge, 2006 in Schmeltz, 2011; Chau, 2012), which would be interesting to explore further. It has been debated, by previous research, that young consumers only think about themselves and not so much the community or the environment (Chau, 2012; Schmeltz, 2012; Twenge, 2012). The reason for asking a question regarding gender is to explore if there are any differences in attitude towards CSR between males and females. Dissimilarities in opinions regarding different CSR attributes may also occur between male and females as well as different age groups.

4.5.2 Knowledge

Questions in the survey were asked regarding the respondents knowledge about CSR. The questions were; Do you know what CSR stands for? Chose the definition you believe is correct below. Where do you obtain information regarding different CSR activities/initiatives?

These questions were asked in order to get a view on the level of awarness they had regarding CSR. Previous studies has shown that consumers knowledge regarding CSR is limited. It is also important to understand where the consumers attain their information regarding CSR. Reaserch has shown that consumers generally do not actively go out and search for information regarding different CSR activities. It is interesting to explore which source of information that seems to be the most imporatant for young consumer today.

4.5.3 Attitudes

Further information regarding consumers awareness and attitudes towards CSR in a buying situation were investigated with the help of question 6, 9, 10 and 11 in the survey. These questions were; Do you pay close attention to the producer's/seller's CSR activities when buying a product? Can you recall any CSR activities by a brand that you are currently using? Have you ever bought a

product mainly for the producer or seller's CSR activities? You avoid buying and using a product if its producer involves in socially irresponsible practices?

It would be interesting to know if CSR activities in fact effect the respondents when they are in a buying situation. According to the decision making process various different elements are taken into account when evaluating which product to buy. Previous research has demonstrated that consumers generally have a positive view on corporations which engage in CSR activities (Alniacik, Alniacik & Genc, 2011; Green & Peloza, 2011; Öberseder & Schlegelmilch, 2011). Therefor it would be interesting to explore if this also means that they avoid buying products from socially irresponsible corporations. Furthermore, it is interesting to explore if the students find CSR important, but it is not something that actually affects them in a buying decision.

It has been reported that consumers find it important for companies to engage in various CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2001; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Green & Peloza, 2011; Schmeltz, 2012). Previous research has demonstrated that consumers generally have a positive view on corporations which engage in CSR activities (Alniacik, Alniacik & Genc, 2011; Green & Peloza, 2011; Öberseder & Schlegelmilch, 2011). It would be interesting to study if this is the case with young student consumers as well. Due to this the following questions were asked in the survey: Do you think it is important for corporations to understand the social setting within which they operate and contribute positively to it? The CSR strategy of a corporation impacts its reputation positively?

Previous research has validated that consumers are more prone to buy products if the CSR activity related to their own interest or concern (Green & Peloza, 2011). Furthermore, Johnson (2009) argues that consumers today are all looking for a bargain. Because of this it may be difficult for premium price product to survive on the market. Premium price products are often associated with some CSR

activity, such as ecological, fair trade among others. Therefore it would be interesting to explore if socially responsible products are something young consumers find important and want to pay anything extra for. Especially since research has shown that young consumers today tend to care more about themselves than the community, environment and the group as a whole (Chau, 2012). In order to investigate this further the following questions were asked: How likely is it that you will buy a product if it involves CSR activities of your own interests? How much extra are you willing to pay for products from socially responsible producers?

As stated before research has shown that young consumers today put their own needs first (Twenge, 2012). Due to this the importance regarding different CSR activities and initiatives were asked. This was done in order to understand what CSR activities or initiatives that the respondents found most important. Furthermore, it would be interesting to understand what factors are most important when the students are in a buying situation. Research has revealed that in the decision-making process brand image and reputation is considered an important factor (Armstrong et al., 2009; Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Furthermore, according to Carrigan and Attalla (2001), price, value, trend and brand image are the most important factors for consumers when they are choosing a product. In order to investigate this further, regarding students as consumers, the following questions were asked. What do you think about the relative importance of the below factors and their influence when you are buying products? Quality, Price, Producers CSR, Brand image and reputation. What do you think about the importance of the below listed CSR initiatives? Ecological production process, environmentally friendly products. Reduce packaging and use of ecological packaging materials, waste reduction. Against animal testing. Contribute to local communities. Contribute to third world countries and communities. Fund raising for an important cause.

4.5.4 Specific CSR activities

In order to get a further understanding regarding what initiatives were perceived as the most important specific CSR activities were explained. The questions were tied to specific CSR activities that can be found in today's marketing. The activities have been chosen to be suitable for the respondents. Three specific CSR activities were chosen, each with a different initiative. The respondents then rated the relative importance, in their opinion, to the CSR activities. This was done in order to see if the student's answers would be cohesive with their previous statements regarding different CSR initiatives and their relative importance to them (Question 15). Question 16 was connected to a CSR activity about the third world and its communities. Question (17) was about a local community in Sweden. The last CSR activity, question 18, concerned the environment. The three questions are the following: H&M, a Swedish clothing brand, has a new collection called H&M for water. The company states that 25% of the sales price will be donated to sustainable water projects. Would you purchase a garment from this collection in order to support H&M and this cause? Each year McDonalds' in Sweden have a weekend, during which 10% of the sales are donated towards building a new Ronald McDonald house in Uppsala. Would you go to McDonalds and eat this specific weekend to support their cause? Apples goal that their whole establishment only should be driven by renewable energy, such as sun, wind or water. In 2012, 75% of their goal was accomplished. Is this something you find important?

4.6 Reliability

The reliability of a study can be evaluated with the help of three requirements. The first requirement is that the study should be able to give the same results when completed in another occasion. Secondly, if the study is replicated other observers should reach similar observations. Finally transparency should be present in how sense was made from the raw data (Saunders et al. 2009).

Saunders et al. (2009) also argues that there are four different threats towards reliability. The first threat is the subject or participant error. For example, a questionnaire regarding employee enthusiasm presented on a Friday may give a different result than presented on a Monday. Hence, a more neutral time should be considered in this case. The second threat is subject or participant bias. An example is when respondents say what they think the interviewer wants them to say. When this occurs the respondents real opinions do not materialize in the research. Thirdly, observer error may occur. This happens when several people are performing the same interview but by using different methods. The last threat is observer bias. When the replies from an interview are interpreted differently, observer bias occurs (Saunders et al. 2009).

Since the dissertation will be using a survey as a research strategy and not interviews, observer bias and observer error cannot occur. However, if the respondents do not find it interesting to answer the survey they might do it quickly and therefore not be as thorough. Previous published studies on CSR and consumer behavior has used a similar approach and measurements as this dissertation, which makes the reliability stable. Furthermore, previous research used in this dissertation is easily obtainable and because of this the study can easily be replicated. These different factors all lead to a reliable dissertation.

4.7 Validity

The validity of a study discusses if there really is a relationship between two variables or if the result is causal. Sometimes this is referred to as internal validity. According to Saunders et al. (2009) validity is if the findings are really about what they seem to be about. There are six different threats towards validity. These threats are; history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation and ambiguity about casual direction. History threat occurs when a study is done in a particular time that has been influenced by something in the past. The second threat, testing, appears if the respondents think that the result of the study may have a negative impact on them. The instrumentation threat happens when there is

a change between the pre-test and the actual test. Mortality refers to when the participants or respondents decide to leave the study. If an important factor change during the study, maturation can appear and affect the study and its validity. The last threat to validity is ambiguity about casual direction. This occurs when it is problematic to know which factor is being influenced and which is influencing (Saunders et al., 2009).

In order to create validity when using a survey it is important that the measures what it is supposed to measure. Finding other results or previous studies that supports the findings in your study can also create validity. Saunders et al. (2009) state that there are three different types of validity when it comes to surveys. Content validity is the first type. It regards whether the measurement questions within the survey are enough to cover the investigative questions. Criterion-related validity discusses how or if the measurement questions are enough to make correct forecasts. The final type is construct validity; this refers to if the measurement questions actually measure what they are intending to measure (Saunders et al., 2009).

For this dissertation none of the six threats of validity occurred. The survey can be considered to be reasonably valid. This is due to the fact that most of the questions that were asked measured what they were intended to. Furthermore, the results from this dissertation are supported by previous studies done on CSR.

4.8 Generalizability

Generalizability is often recognized as external validity (Saunders et al. 2009). It is the conclusions made from a sample population in a study applied on the population at large. In order to accomplish generalizability the researcher preferably needs data on a large group of respondents. The best way to accomplish generalizability is by using a quantitative approach. (Colorado State University, n.d.). It is important to attain a large enough ample size in order to be

able to generalize the findings (Saunders et al., 2009). If it is not generalisable the researcher can only apply the findings onto the specific sample in the study he/she has made.

The aim of this dissertation is to get as large of a sample as possible in order to make generalizations. However, since this dissertation will be using a non-probability sample technique it reduces the possibility to make generalizations.

Chapter 5

Analysis

This chapter will present and explain the raw data as well as an analysis of the data. Both frequency distributions as well as statistical significance differences were analyzed.

5.1 Introduction

The initial sample size that was supposed to be collected for this analysis was 100. Out of the 89 surveys that were received only two came back blank. The respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their attitudes towards CSR. These questions were scaled with a likert-scale between 1-5. Number 1 was labeled as not at all and 5 very much. When asked questions about CSR initiatives and if the respondents found them important 1 was labeled unimportant and 5 very important. The three last questions were tied to specific CSR activities and whether the respondents were likely to take an interest in them. For these questions number 1 was labeled unlikely and number 5 likely. The median was applied since the data is non-parametric distributed, therefore the mean could not be used.

5.2 Result frequency distribution

In total 56 of the respondents were female (64%) and 31 were male (35,6%). A number of 46 respondents were between the age 18-21 (52,9%), 28 between the ages 22-25 (32,2%), 6 between 26-30 (6,9%) and finally 7 student were 30 years old or more (8%).

The majority of the respondents (72,4%) stated that they did not know what the abbreviation CSR stands for. However, when they had the possibility to chose between 3 different definitions 87,4% answered correctly that CSR stands for

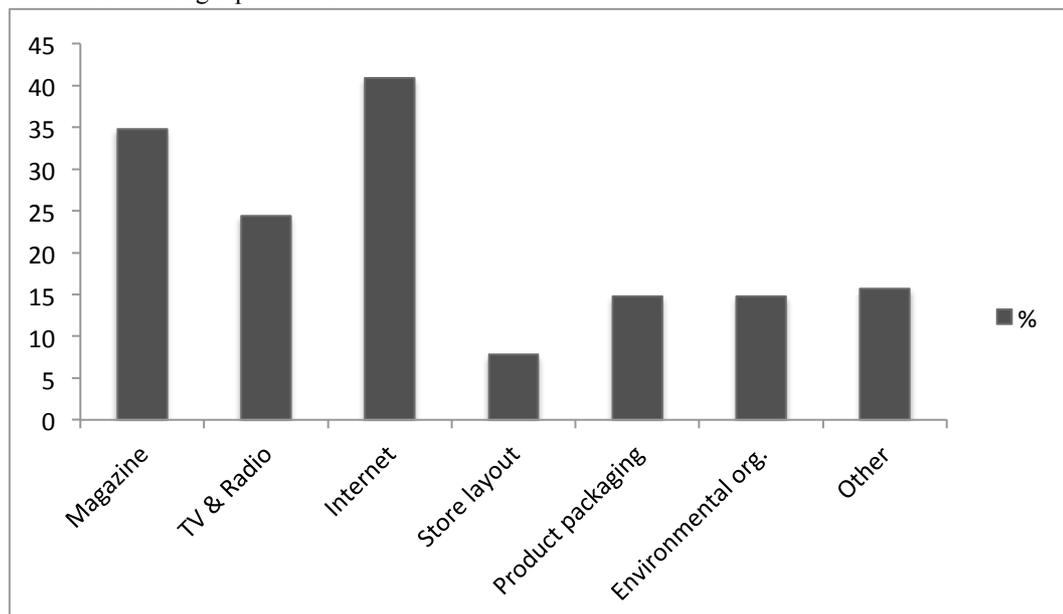
Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate Social Result was chosen by 4,6% and 8% chose Corporate Social Reaction as an answer. This can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage for question 4.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Corporate Social Responsibility	76	87,4	87,4	87,4
Corporate Social Result	4	4,6	4,6	92,0
Corporate Social Reaction	7	8,0	8,0	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

When asked where the respondents gathered their information regarding different CSR activities or initiatives, Internet was the major source of information. This can be seen in Table 2. Interestingly Magazine or Newspaper was the second largest source of information, not TV and Radio. It also became evident that CSR information is not presented in stores adequately. If a company wants a consumer to buy a product, while displaying that they are socially responsible, the message does not seem to go through. It seems as if corporations are better at presenting their CSR activities through TV commercials and magazine ads than in their own stores. These results are inline with previous research by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), which showed that consumers wait to be informed about a company's CSR, they do not actively search for the information themselves.

Table 2. Percentage question 5.



It was interesting to note that the respondents did not seem to pay close attention to the producer or seller's CSR activities when buying a product. The median for this question was 2, which is equivalent to a small amount of attention (Saunders et al., 2009). Almost one third of the respondents, 32,5%, do not pay any attention at all to CSR activities when buying a product. Furthermore, only 2,4% consider this very important when in a buying situation. Answers in the different categories (1-5) are depicted in percentage.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage for question 6.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	27	31,0	32,5	32,5
	2	20	23,0	24,1	56,6
	3	30	34,5	36,1	92,8
	4	4	4,6	4,8	97,6
	5	2	2,3	2,4	100,0
	Total	83	95,4	100,0	
Missing	System	4	4,6		
Total		87	100,0		

Even though the respondents do not pay close attention to CSR when they purchase a product, the majority still think that it is important for corporations to contribute positively towards the social setting in which they operate. The median for question 7 was 4, which clearly indicates that the respondents think that it is very important for corporations to positively contribute to society. Only a total of 15.3 % of the respondents indicated that they did not find this as an important issue.

Table 4. Frequency and percentage for question 7.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5,7	5,9	5,9
	2	8	9,2	9,4	15,3
	3	26	29,9	30,6	45,9
	4	26	29,9	30,6	76,5
	5	20	23,0	23,5	100,0
	Total	85	97,7	100,0	
Missing	System	2	2,3		
Total		87	100,0		

Table 5 illustrates that even though the median was 3, 45,2% of the respondents considered CSR strategies to have a positive impact on the corporation's reputation. The answers to question number 8 contradicts the fact that few individuals (2,4%) in question 6 answered that they pay close attention to a corporation's CSR when buying products. This indicates that the respondents are generally positive towards CSR activities but it does not seem to effect them in a buying decision making process.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage for question 8.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	10,3	11,0	11,0
	2	10	11,5	12,2	23,2
	3	26	29,9	31,7	54,9
	4	24	27,6	29,3	84,1
	5	13	14,9	15,9	100,0
	Total	82	94,3	100,0	
Missing	System	5	5,7		
Total		87	100,0		

Even though the respondents generally seemed to have a positive attitude towards CSR, the majority (85,9%) could not recall any CSR activities by a brand that they are currently using. The few (14,1%) respondents that could recall CSR activities listed brands such as H&M, IKEA, McDonalds, Body Shop, Gevalia and generally "krav" labeled food as examples. When asked if they had ever bought a product mainly because of the producer or seller's CSR the majority (88,2%) said no. This indicates that even if the general perception of CSR and its activities are positive, students do not consider CSR activities when consuming products. However, some consumers are highly ethical and attentive towards CSR when purchasing products. This segment of consumers has been discussed previously in chapter 3.4.1 with the help of Figure 3 as well as Carrigan and Attala's (2001) previous study.

The answers to question 7 (Table 4) highlighted that the respondents found it important for corporations to engage in CSR activities. However, the answers to question 11 (Table 6) are in contradiction to this. The majority (38,4%) of the respondents answered that they were indifferent when it comes to buying a product from a socially irresponsible corporation. This can also be observed with the median of question 11, which was 3. Only 10,5% (number 5 in the table) of the respondents answered that they would avoid buying products from socially irresponsible corporations. This is the same percentage as the respondents who answered that they do not care at all (number 1 in the table).

Table 6. Frequency and percentage for question 11.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	10,3	10,5	10,5
	2	16	18,4	18,6	29,1
	3	33	37,9	38,4	67,4
	4	19	21,8	22,1	89,5
	5	9	10,3	10,5	100,0
	Total	86	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
	Total	87	100,0		

Answers to question 12, illustrated in Table 7, show that almost half (49,4%) of the respondents answered that they consider it indifferent. However, more than a third (34,5%), answered that this was an important factor to them. This is somewhat inline with previous research that has shown that consumers are more perceptive to CSR activities that are inline with their own interests (Green & Peloza, 2011). However, 16,1% (number 1 and 2) of the respondents answered that they are unlikely to buy a product even if it involves CSR activities of their own interest or concern.

Table 7. Frequency and percentage for question 12.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	9,2	9,9	9,9
	2	5	5,7	6,2	16,0
	3	40	46,0	49,4	65,4
	4	18	20,7	22,2	87,7
	5	10	11,5	12,3	100,0
	Total	81	93,1	100,0	
Missing	System	6	6,9		
Total		87	100,0		

When asked how much extra the respondents were willing to pay for products from socially responsible producers the majority (54,7%) answered between 0-10% extra. Surprisingly 17,4% were not interested in paying anything extra at all. This indicates that some respondents think CSR is good but they do not want to pay for it. To some extent this agrees with Twenge's (2012) research regarding young consumers and that they mainly care for themselves and not the group as a whole. Furthermore, it is inline with Johnson (2009) and his claim that today everyone wants as much value as possible, for as little as possible.

Table 8. Frequency and percentage for question 13.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	15	17,2	17,4	17,4
	0-10%	47	54,0	54,7	72,1
	10-20%	21	24,1	24,4	96,5
	21+%	3	3,4	3,5	100,0
	Total	86	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
Total		87	100,0		

Question 14 is related to specific factors or attributes and their influence on a consumer in a purchasing situation. The most important factor for the respondents was quality. Quality had a median of 5, price a median of 4, producer CSR a median of 3 and brand image a median of 4. A total of 82,7% of the respondents rated quality an important or very important factor when buying a product. Price was the second most important factor. Here 72,4% answered that this was an

important or very important factor. Producers CSR was not considered as an important factor. More than a third (37%) seemed indifferent towards this factor and 38,2% answered that it was an unimportant or not so important factor. Brand image and reputation was considered an important or very important factor by 50,6% of the respondents. This correlates to the fact that in the decision-making process brand image and reputation is considered an important factor (Armstrong et al., 2009; Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Furthermore, according to Carrigan and Attalla (2001), price, value, trend and brand image are the most important factors for consumers when they are choosing a product.

Table 9.1. Frequency and percentage for question 14; Importance of Quality.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unimportant	3	3,4	3,4	3,4
2	3	3,4	3,4	6,9
3	9	10,3	10,3	17,2
4	27	31,0	31,0	48,3
Important	45	51,7	51,7	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.2. Frequency and percentage for question 14; Importance of Price.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unimportant	3	3,4	3,4	3,4
2	5	5,7	5,7	9,2
3	16	18,4	18,4	27,6
4	30	34,5	34,5	62,1
Important	33	37,9	37,9	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.3. Frequency and percentage for question 14; Importance of Producers CSR.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	7	8,0	8,6	8,6
	2	24	27,6	29,6	38,3
	3	30	34,5	37,0	75,3
	4	13	14,9	16,0	91,4
	Important	7	8,0	8,6	100,0
	Total	81	93,1	100,0	
Missing	System	6	6,9		
Total		87	100,0		

Table 9.4. Frequency and percentage for question 14; Importance of Brand image and reputation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	8	9,2	9,2	9,2
	2	13	14,9	14,9	24,1
	3	22	25,3	25,3	49,4
	4	32	36,8	36,8	86,2
	Important	12	13,8	13,8	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Question 15 is related to specific CSR initiatives and their relative importance for the respondent, Tables 10.1-10.6. The answers showed that the 6 different initiatives (ecological production, waste reduce, against animal testing, contribute to local communities, contribute to third world countries/communities and fund raising for an important cause) all had a median of 4. Approximately half of the respondents answered that they considered each one of the initiatives important or very important. Close to one third of the respondents listed each initiative as neither important nor unimportant. Instead, they seemed indifferent towards the initiatives.

Table 10.1. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities;
Ecological production and environmentally friendly products.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	7	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2	9	10,3	10,3	18,4
	3	27	31,0	31,0	49,4
	4	26	29,9	29,9	79,3
	Important	18	20,7	20,7	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.2. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities;
Reduce packaging and use of ecological packaging materials, waste reduction.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	7	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2	8	9,2	9,2	17,2
	3	27	31,0	31,0	48,3
	4	26	29,9	29,9	78,2
	Important	19	21,8	21,8	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.3. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities;
Animal testing.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	8	9,2	9,2	9,2
	2	7	8,0	8,0	17,2
	3	24	27,6	27,6	44,8
	4	13	14,9	14,9	59,8
	Important	35	40,2	40,2	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.4. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities; Contribute to local communities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	8	9,2	9,2	9,2
	2	9	10,3	10,3	19,5
	3	26	29,9	29,9	49,4
	4	32	36,8	36,8	86,2
	Important	12	13,8	13,8	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.5. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities; Contribute to third world countries and communities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	5	5,7	5,7	5,7
	2	3	3,4	3,4	9,2
	3	28	32,2	32,2	41,4
	4	34	39,1	39,1	80,5
	Important	17	19,5	19,5	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.6. Frequency and percentage for question 15; Importance of CSR activities; Fund raising for an important cause (for example 'rosa bandet').

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	4	4,6	4,6	4,6
	2	10	11,5	11,5	16,1
	3	24	27,6	27,6	43,7
	4	27	31,0	31,0	74,7
	Important	22	25,3	25,3	100,0
	Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Question 16,17 and 18 are all related to specific CSR activities. H&M's campaign collection called "H&M for water". H&M will donate 25% of the sales price towards water projects, which will help to improve access to safe water and sanitation around the world (H&M, n.d.). Almost half of the respondents (45,9%)

answered that they would most likely or likely buy a garment from the collection “H&M for water”. However, 17,2% answered that they are unlikely or quite unlikely to purchase a garment from this collection. This contradicts the findings in question 14. When asked about CSR initiatives and their importance, contribution to third world countries and communities were considered important. Therefore one would think that this CSR initiative, “H&M for water”, would be considered more important than it actually turned out to be. The median for this question was 3.

Table 11. Frequency and percentage for question 16.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unlikely	6	6,9	6,9	6,9
2	9	10,3	10,3	17,2
3	32	36,8	36,8	54,0
4	21	24,1	24,1	78,2
Likely	19	21,8	21,8	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

Question 17 asked if the respondents would eat at McDonalds on a specific weekend when 10% of all the sales would be donated towards building a new Ronald McDonald house in Uppsala (McDonalds, n.d.). A total of 54% of the respondents answered that they were unlikely or quite unlikely to support this cause. A fourth (25,3) of the respondents were indifferent towards the cause and the question had a median of 2. This can be related towards Twenge’s (2012) studies that showed a decline in young consumers interest for others. It was interesting to see that the respondents were more inclined to support a cause for countries around the world rather than to support a local cause.

Table 12. Frequency and percentage for question 17.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unlikely	27	31,0	31,0	31,0
2	20	23,0	23,0	54,0
3	22	25,3	25,3	79,3
4	11	12,6	12,6	92,0
Likely	7	8,0	8,0	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

The last question in the survey asked if the respondents found it important that a large company, in this case Apple, has as a goal that their establishment only should be driven by renewable energy (Apple, n.d.). More than half of the respondents (57,4) found this important or very important. This indicates that the environment is becoming a more and more important factor when it comes to CSR activities. Only 5,7% answered that they found this cause unimportant.

Table 13. Frequency and percentage for question 18.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unlikely	5	5,7	5,7	5,7
2	12	13,8	13,8	19,5
3	20	23,0	23,0	42,5
4	27	31,0	31,0	73,6
Likely	23	26,4	26,4	100,0
Total	87	100,0	100,0	

5.3 Gender, age and knowledge differences

The questions that will be described in this part are those that have demonstrated a statistically significant difference between age groups and/or gender. Hence, the questions that are not commented under this paragraph did not show statistically significant differences. For this dissertation the p-value of 0,05 was used in order to observe significant statistical differences.

5.3.1 Gender differences

As written in the beginning of this chapter, 56 of the respondents were female (64%) and 31 were male (35,6%).

Question 11 (Table 14) demonstrated a significant difference ($p=0,019$) in opinion between male and female respondents. The sum of ranks revealed that female respondents had ranked the question higher than the male students. The sum of ranks for men was 1097, while for women it was 2644. Accordingly women found it more important than men to abstain from buying products from socially irresponsible corporations. This means that in a buying decision process women act more socially responsible than men when it comes to young consumers. All the male respondents answered this question and only one female was a non-responder.

Table 14. Statistically significant difference between genders, question 11; Avoid buying products from socially irresponsible corporations.

N=86	Question 11
Mann-Whitney U	601,000
Wilcoxon W	1097,000
Z	-2,353
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,019

Table 14.1. Statistically significant difference between genders, question 11; Avoid buying products from socially irresponsible corporations. Spearman correlation test.

Spearman correlation test		Question 11
	Correlation Coefficient	,255*
Gender	Sig. (2-tailed)	,018
	N	86

Table 15 illustrates the results by gender regarding the three different CSR initiatives that displayed a statistical significant difference between male and females for question 15. All three different initiatives had a p-value lower than 0,05 ($p=0,023$, $p=0,031$ and $p=0,06$ respectively). For each of the initiatives the females had a higher sum of ranks than male respondents. The sum of ranks for women was close to 2700 for all initiatives whereas the results for men were in

the range of 1100 for all three of the initiatives. This indicates that females rated these three initiatives (ecological production process and environmentally friendly products, waste reduction/ reduce packaging and use of ecological packaging and against animal testing) higher than the males. Hence, female respondents thought the initiatives were more important than the male respondents did and especially regarding against animal testing of products.

Table 15. Statistically significant difference between genders question 15; Importance of CSR initiatives.

N=87	Ecological production process	Waste reduction	Against animal testing
Mann-Whitney U	620,500	633,500	569,500
Wilcoxon W	1116,500	1129,500	1065,500
Z	-2,271	-2,153	-2,774
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,023	,031	,006

Table 15.1. Statistically significant difference between genders question 15; Importance of CSR initiatives. Spearman correlation test.

Spearman correlation test	Ecological production process	Waste reduction	Against animal testing
Correlation Coefficient	,245*	,232*	,299**
Gender Sig. (2-tailed)	,022	,030	,005

H&M’s campaign “H&M for water”, which was described earlier in this chapter, proved to be more popular among the female respondents than among the male. The p-value for this question was 0,013. For females the sum of ranks was 2734, while for males it was only 1094. This reveals that females rated “H&M for water” quite a lot more important than what the males did. However, it is impossible to know if this may be due to that the question is tied to H&M as a brand or due to the CSR activity itself.

Table 16. Statistically significant difference between genders. Question 16; H&M for water.

N=87	H&M
Mann-Whitney U	598,000
Wilcoxon W	1094,000
Z	-2,489
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,013

Table 16.1. Statistically significant difference between genders. Question 16; H&M for water. Spearman Correlation test.

Spearman correlation test		H.M
	Correlation Coefficient	,268*
Gender	Sig. (2-tailed)	,012
	N	87

5.3.2 Age differences

As stated previously in this chapter the different age groups were distributed as follows; 46 respondents were between the ages 18-21, 28 between 22-25, 6 between 26-30 and finally 7 respondents 30 years or older. After conducting a Kruskal-Wallis test and analyzing the results, the questions that showed a significant difference were analyzed further. This was accomplished by performing a Mann-Whitney test pairwise for all the different age groups.

The Kruskal-Wallis test demonstrated a significant statistical difference between the age groups for question 3 (Table 17). A significant difference was illustrated between the age group 18-21 and 22-25 with a p- value of 0,00. This indicates that there is a difference between the age groups regarding how many knew what the abbreviation of CSR stood for. Furthermore, there was a difference between the age groups 18-21 and 26-30 (p=0,001). The other groups did not show any significant differences since they all had a p-value over 0,05.

Table 17. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 3.

N=87	Do you know what CSR stands for?
Chi-Square	25,054
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,000

When analyzing question 6 (Table 18), if the respondents pay close attention to CSR activities when buying a product, it revealed a significant statistical difference between the age groups (p -value=0,38). Further results demonstrated that it was the age groups 18-21 and 26-30 that differed (p =0,009). This indicates that there is a difference between these two groups when it comes to paying attention to CSR when in a buying situation. The other age groups did not show any significant difference of opinion for this question.

Analyzing question 7 (Table 18) resulted in a p -value of 0,041 it indicated a significant difference between the age groups. The age groups that differed when conducting further analysis were 18-21 and 30+ (p =0,01) as well as 22-25 and 30+ (p =0,06). This indicates that there is a difference in opinion regarding the importance for corporations to contribute positively towards society between the younger respondents (18-21 and 22-25) and the oldest (30+). The other groups did not show any differences since they all had a p -value between 0,1-0,3. The results for this question are inline with previous research. Research done by Twenge (2012) has demonstrated that young people today put their own needs first. Because of this other traits such as, society, the community has declined.

Question 8 (Table 18) also revealed a significant difference with a p -value of 0,044. Further analysis demonstrated that the younger respondents (18-21) and the older (30+) were the two groups that differed in opinion (p =0,009) regarding if a corporations CSR strategy influences its reputation positively. Interestingly both these two groups show a significant difference for both question 7 and 8. It can be assumed that if one finds it important for a corporation to contribute positively

towards society they will also believe that this impacts the corporation's reputation positively. The other age groups did not show any significant differences since they all had a p-value greater than 0,05.

Table 18. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 6-8.

	Q6; Pay close attention N=83	Q7; Important for corporations N=85	Q8; CSR strategy impact positively N=82
Chi-Square	8,444	8,276	8,098
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	,038	,041	,044

Table 18.1. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 6 and 8. Spearman correlation test.

Spearman correlation test		Q6; Pay close attention	Q7; CSR strategy impact positively
	Correlation Coefficient	,281*	,265*
Age	Sig. (2-tailed)	,010	,016
	N	83	82

Question 9 and 10 (Table 19) also showed a significant statistical difference between the age groups. The p-value for question was 0,001. For both question 9 and 10 it was the age groups 18-21 and 22-25 as well as 18-21 and 26-30 that demonstrated a significant statistical difference. Question 9, age groups 18-21 and 22-25 had a p-value of 0,049, which is just below 0,05. The second age groups (18-21 and 26-30) that revealed a difference for question 9 had a p-value of 0,01. This indicates a statistical difference regarding if the respondents could recall any CSR activities by a brand that they were currently using. However, it may be difficult to remember knowledge about specific CSR activities and respective brands. This may have had an affect on the answers given by the respondents and hence also on the results. Furthermore, previous research by Carrigan & Attalla, (2001) demonstrated that consumers are not active in finding information regarding a corporation's CSR activities. Instead, they wait until the corporation itself inform them. The other age groups did not show any statistical differences, their p-values were between 0,07-0,9.

The p-value for differences between age groups for question 10 was 0,00. The age groups 18-21 and 22-25 had a p-value of 0,008. This indicates a difference about buying and using products mainly due to the CSR activity itself. The other two groups, 18-21 and 26-30, had a p-value of 0,006, also revealing a statistical difference. The remaining pairwise comparisons did not reveal any statistical differences; they all had a p-value above 0,05.

Table 19. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 9-10.

	Currently using CSR products N=85	Bought products mainly for the CSR N=85
Chi-Square	17,541	26,175
df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	,001	,000

Table 19.1. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 9; Currently using CSR products. Spearman correlation test.

Spearman correlation test		Currently using CSR products	Bought products mainly for the CSR
Age	Correlation Coefficient	-,336**	-,465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,000
	N	85	85

Table 20 reveals a significant difference in opinion between the different age groups ($p=0,018$) regarding H&M's campaign "H&M for water". When conducting further analysis it demonstrated a difference between the age groups 18-21 and 30+ ($p=0,005$) as well as 22-25 and 30+ ($p=0,04$). This discloses a difference of opinion regarding the likelihood to buy a garment from H&M's campaign. The campaign also proved more popular with females than with males as explained earlier in the chapter. It is impossible to know if these differences are due to that the question is tied to H&M as a brand or due to the CSR activity itself. Throughout the age difference analysis 18-21 is the group that has demonstrated the most differences when compared with the other age groups. This indicates that today younger students as consumers think differently about CSR than older students.

Table 20. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 16.

	H&M for water N=87
Chi-Square	10,070
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,018

Table 20.1. Statistically significant difference between ages. Question 16. Spearman correlation test.

Spearman correlation test		H&M for water
	Correlation Coefficient	-,316**
Age	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003
	N	87

5.3.3 Knowledge differences

Question number 3, “Do you know what CSR stands for?”, was asked in order to analyze the student’s awareness and knowledge about CSR. The majority of the respondents (72,4%) stated that they did not know what the abbreviation CSR meant. However, when the respondents were divided into two age groups, group 1 between 18-25 years of age and group 2 older than 26 years, significant differences were found between the groups. Only 22% in the younger age group stated that they knew what CSR stands for, whereas in the older age group, 100% of the respondents knew what CSR stands for. This illustrates that there is a clear knowledge gap between the two age groups regarding CSR knowledge. It also reveals that there is a dramatic increase in knowledge regarding CSR after the age of 25. This was demonstrated previously in the dissertation using the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney test. It also revealed a significant difference between the younger students, 18-21 years old and the older students, 25 and above.

Table 21. Statistically significant difference between ages regarding knowledge about CSR.

CSR dicotom, knowledge	Age
Mann-Whitney U	315,500
Wilcoxon W	2331,500
Z	-4,625
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

When analyzing only the younger students, 18-21, it was revealed that, generally, the knowledge regarding CSR did not affect their buying behavior. This outcome could be due to the fact that only 22% of this age group knows what CSR stands for, which in turn may have affected the results. The older students, 25 and above, were too few to allow for further statistical analysis. Therefore, further analysis was done on all respondents using knowledge of CSR as grouping variable.

Table 22 demonstrates that the students who know what CSR stands for to some extent act in another way compared to the others. By analyzing the p-value for the different questions dissimilarities were found for questions 8-10, which all had a p-value below 0,05. Questions 8-10 were the following; The CSR strategy of a corporation impacts its reputation positively? Can you recall any CSR activities by a brand that you are currently using? Have you bought a product mainly for the producer or seller's CSR activities? The results indicate that students who know what CSR means consider that a company's CSR strategy positively reflects the image of the company. Furthermore these students are currently using products from socially responsible companies. These students may accordingly take CSR into consideration when making a buying decision. This is further highlighted since they also state to have bought products mainly due to the CSR activity itself. It can be debated whether the students who do not know what CSR stands for actually are totally oblivious to CSR or if they simply do not care about it when in a buying situation.

Table 22. Statistically significant difference regarding knowledge about CSR for questions 8-10.

CSR dicotom, knowledge	Q8; CSR strategy impact positively	Q9; Currently using CSR products	Q10; Bought products mainly for the CSR
Mann-Whitney U	484,500	451,000	597,000
Wilcoxon W	2254,500	751,000	897,000
Z	-2,070	-4,548	-2,362
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,038	,000	,018

A statistical significant difference (p-value = 0,01) was identified when it came to H&M’s campaign “H&M for water”, which is shown in table 23. This indicates that student’s with knowledge about CSR and their opinion of H&M’s campaign is different compared to students who do not know what CSR is.

Table 23. Statistically significant difference regarding knowledge about CSR for question 16, H&M for water.

CSR dicotom, knowledge	H&M
Mann-Whitney U	495,500
Wilcoxon W	795,500
Z	-2,573
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,010

Further analysis, table 23.1, illustrated the buying differences in behavior regarding the students. Table 23.1 reveals that out of the students who do know what CSR stands for only 25% are likely to support “H&M for water”. This means that even though the students know the benefits of CSR and understand what it is, 75% are not willing shop garments from the “H&M for water” collection. It can be debated if this is due to the fact that these students do not want to support the cause itself, to improve access to safe water and sanitation around the world, or if it is due to some other reason. What is even more interesting is that in the group of students who are oblivious to CSR, 54% state that they are likely to support “H&M for water”. One can of course question if the result is due to H&M as a brand or in fact because of the campaign itself.

Table 23.1. Statistically significant difference regarding knowledge and buying behavior regarding H&M for water.

H&M	CSR dicotom, knowledge	
	0	1
	Count	Count
Unlikely	4	2
2	2	7
3	23	9
4	19	2
Likely	15	4

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The final chapter of the dissertation will include a short summary, conclusions, critical reflections and recommendations for future research.

6.1 Summary

CSR is generally considered as activities performed by a company in order to strengthen its positive image. Previous research has indicated that there is a connection between a company's CSR actions and its consumer's reactions towards the company and its different product/s. However, few studies have investigated university students' attitudes towards CSR as well as different CSR initiatives. Furthermore, few studies regarding consumers' attitudes in Sweden have been conducted. Therefore this dissertation aims at studying the knowledge, attitudes and the importance of CSR initiatives among young university business students. Moreover, to investigate the influence CSR might have on the purchasing decision making process.

A survey was conducted among young business students at the University of Kristianstad, which consisted of 18 questions regarding CSR. The data was processed and analyzed with the help of SPSS. The analyses lead to several conclusions.

6.2 Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to study the knowledge, attitudes and the behaviors related to CSR initiatives among young university business students. A second aim is to study the influence of CSR activities on the decision making process when buying a product.

The main research question this dissertation aimed at answering was:

How does knowledge and attitudes towards CSR affect buying behavior in University students?

The help of different sub-questions answered the research question. The first sub-questions was:

Is there a difference between the students or consumers that have knowledge about CSR or not?

The results from this dissertation indicate that knowledge regarding CSR activities is an important factor when it comes to making a buying decision. It was also demonstrated the factors like age and gender were important variables affecting both attitudes and buying behavior. As previous studies also have shown the knowledge regarding CSR was proven to be very low among the students. The majority of the respondents (72,4%) stated that they did not know what the abbreviation CSR meant. However, when divided into age groups all the older students (26 years of age and above) knew what CSR stood, whereas only 22% of the younger students (18-25) were aware of what the abbreviation CSR stood for. This shows that there is a vast gap in knowledge between these two age groups. Moreover it reveals that after the age of 25 the students seem to gain a lot more knowledge regarding CSR.

This dissertation also revealed that knowledge regarding CSR generally did not have an affect on the students when in a buying decision. However, there were a few differences in opinion between the students with knowledge about CSR and those without. The student's who has knowledge about CSR finds that a company's CSR strategy do have a positive affect on the image of the company. Furthermore these students were currently using products from socially responsible companies. It could therefor be assumed that this group of students does take CSR into consideration when making a buying decision. This assumption is further strengthened since these students state that they have bought products mainly due to the CSR activity itself.

Two of the sub questions were: *Do university students, as consumers, care about CSR when they purchase products? Are they willing to pay more for products from socially responsible companies?*

The analysis revealed that university students in general have a low average awareness when it comes to what CSR actually stands for. As stated previously consumers today expect corporations to communicate more about their different CSR activities and initiatives. Consumers do not actively search for CSR information from different companies. However, the two most popular sources when attaining information regarding CSR were the Internet and printed media such as magazines and newspapers. Consequently, when companies want to communicate CSR with their consumers these are the media channels that should be used.

Even though the analysis demonstrated a generally positive attitude towards CSR, students did not pay much attention to producers' CSR when buying products. This could be because the students do not have much information about CSR activities. Therefore, they might ignore different CSR attributes when in a purchasing situation. This is contradictory with the fact that most students find CSR and the different attributes important. Also, students with knowledge of CSR reported that they bought products due to CSR activities performed by the company. However, when asked how much extra they were willing to pay for products from socially responsible corporations the majority answered between 0-10%. Surprisingly 17,4% answered that they did not want to pay anything extra at all. This indicates that young consumers maybe are getting more and more selfish, only considering what benefits them. Both Chau (2012) and Twenge (2012) claim that this is the case. The results are also coherent with Johnson's (2009) claim that consumers today are all interested in finding a bargain hence price is the most important. The results also demonstrated that females considered CSR to be more important than what the male respondents did in several aspects.

The last two sub questions were: *How important is CSR for the students (consumers) decision making process and which initiatives in regards to CSR are regarded as important? Is there a difference in opinion between age and gender regarding CSR and CSR activities or attributes?*

When asked to rate different factors and their importance when buying a product, price, quality and brand image was considered to be very important. The producer's CSR was not considered as important. This is congruent with Carrigan and Attalla (2001) who claimed that price, value, brand image and trend are the most important factors that influence a consumers choice. Consequently, companies can engage in CSR as a competitive advantage, but only if they can provide high quality products and preferably at a good price. Hence, a company with earnest CSR activities cannot attract young consumers unless providing high quality products. Öberseder et al. (2011) argued that CSR is a minor factor rather than a core factor in consumers' purchase decision-making processes. The findings of this dissertation support this argument. Producers CSR do not play an important role for students' decision-making process. However, a small segment of consumers are highly ethical and attentive towards CSR when purchasing products. These findings are coherent with the ones in Carrigan and Attalla's (2001) previous study. The results also further enhance the fact that in the decision-making process brand image and reputation is considered to be important factors (Armstrong et al., 2009; Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Additionally, according to Carrigan and Attalla (2001), price, value, trend and brand image are the most important factors for consumers when they are choosing a product.

Females regarded some CSR initiatives more important than the male respondents. It is difficult to analyze why this was the case. One factor that females found more important than males was to abstain from buying products from socially irresponsible corporations. Consequently, when in a buying decision process women seems to act more socially responsible than men when it comes to

young consumers. Females ranked three of the CSR initiatives higher than the male respondents. These were the following ecological production process and environmentally friendly products, waste reduction/ reduce packaging and use of ecological packaging and against animal testing. One can therefore assume that young females, in general, are more likely to choose ecological products more often when in a buying decision than males. H&M's campaign "H&M for water" also proved to be more popular among the female respondents than among the male. This can of course be debated whether it is connected to the campaign itself or H&M as a brand. Generally the students have a positive attitude towards CSR, but they lack knowledge about it. Furthermore, CSR is not something that generally affects their purchasing decisions.

6.3 Critical reflection

The purpose of this dissertation was to gather data from a large sample so that generalizations could be made. However, due to the rather small sample only limited generalizations can be made. Hence, generalizations cannot be made for students as a population. The aim was from the start to only investigate international business students and their attitudes towards CSR. Due to time limitations and other problems this could not be accomplished. Therefore Swedish business students were asked instead. Unfortunately the survey was conducted in English and never translated for the Swedish students. This may have affected the answers and therefore also the results. However, Swedish students are generally very good at English, therefore I did not perceive there would be any problems.

Another critical reflection is that predictions were made regarding the students' knowledge about CSR. This was done since only business students were asked. In their previous course literature they have touched upon CSR as a subject and therefore I believed they would have more knowledge about it than what they actually had. The results from my dissertation also demonstrated that knowledge about CSR activities in some areas influenced the student's attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, according to Öberseder et al., (2011) consumers' ethical purchase behavior is relevant to their financial status. The respondents in this study were students and they cannot always afford to be ethical consumers even if

they may want to. Hence, the economical situation that for most students are very constrained may have influenced the answers to the survey and also the results and analysis in some way.

6.4 Ethical and societal implications

This dissertation raises the question of acting ethically when in a buying situation. In this study, the understandability and knowledge regarding CSR was generally very low among the respondents. This highlights a major problem in society that can have both social and ethical implications. If the general population is not knowledgeable about CSR activities, it is also unlikely that they will favor socially responsible products when in a buying situation. According to my dissertation, generally, young consumers and men are the two groups with the lowest knowledge about CSR and socially responsible products. Furthermore, it was revealed that men care less when it comes to using animal testing compared to women. This dissertation, as well as previous studies, illustrates that young consumers today do not seem to care about being socially responsible. It is most likely that sustainable production of goods carry higher cost than traditionally produced goods. This dissertation demonstrated that consumers in this age group were unwilling to pay a price premium for socially responsible products. In the future this may result in an overuse and depletion of natural resources.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

It would be interesting to further investigate the relationship between consumers' income and ethical purchase behavior. One reason for this is that consumers do not act as they claim. A gap exists between consumers' ethical purchase intention and their actual purchase behavior (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). In order to attain a better understanding of consumers' actual purchase behavior it is important to investigate this gap further. It would also be interesting to analyze if there are further differences in attitudes towards CSR between other age groups. One example is if older consumers, 60+, care more about CSR than what younger consumers do.

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Appendix 1

CSR - Questionnaire

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

18-21

22-25

26-30

30+

3. Do you know what CSR stands for?

Yes

No

4. Please chose the definition you believe is correct below.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Result

Corporate Social Reaction

5. Where do you obtain information regarding different CSR activities/initiatives?

(You can choose more than one alternative)

- Magazine or newspaper
- TV and radio
- Internet
- Store layout and activities
- Product packaging and labelling
- Environmental organizations
- Other

6. Do you pay close attention to the producer's/seller's CSR activities when buying a product? *(Please mark with an X below)*

Not at all Very much

7. Do you think it is important for corporations to understand the social setting within which they operate and contribute positively to it? *(Please mark with an X below)*

Not at all Very much

8. The CSR strategy of a corporation impacts its reputation positively?

Not at all Very much

14. What do you think about the relative importance of the below factors and their influence when you are buying products?

Quality

Unimportant Important

Price

Unimportant Important

Producers CSR

Unimportant Important

Brand image and reputation

Unimportant Important

15. What do you think about the importance of the below listed CSR initiatives?

Ecological production process, environmentally friendly products

Unimportant Important

Reduce packaging and use ecological packaging materials, waste reduction

Unimportant Important

Against animal testing

Unimportant Important

Contribute to local communities

Unimportant Important

Contribute to third world countries and communities

Unimportant Important

Fund raising for an important cause (ex. “rosa bandet, maj blomman”)

Unimportant Important

16. H&M, a Swedish clothing brand, has a new collection called H&M for water. The company states that 25% of the sales price will be donated to sustainable water projects. Would you purchase a garment from this collection in order to support H&M and this cause?

Unlikely Likely

17. Each year McDonalds’ in Sweden have a weekend, during which 10% of the sales are donated towards building a new Ronald McDonald house in Uppsala. Would you go to McDonalds and eat this specific weekend to support their cause?

Unlikely Likely

18. Apples goal that their whole establishment only should be driven by renewable energy, such as sun, wind, water. In 2012, 75% of their goal was accomplished. Is this something you find important?

Unlikely Likely